

4-11-23

MORE GHOSTS!



IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE WIFE OF

AN OFFICER,

AUTHOR OF THE IRISH HEIRESS.

..... If parted souls
Can leave the midnight caverns dark and damp,
Where sleeps their mould'ring dust, to walk on earth,
This very now the spectre of a man
Stalk'd pale and terrible athwart my sight!

MALLETT.

VOL. I.

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PREFATORY ADDRESS.



SIR, OR MADAM,

YOU *must* be convinced that the best way to procure manuscripts, containing authentic histories is by a journey into the country, more particularly for Gentlemen, who can go out coursing with the Curate, and gossiping with the Huckster; or, perhaps, loiter an unimportant hour in decyphering tombstone inscriptions. Indeed, some

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Editors

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Editors have met with tolerable success in London ; but still, the country is the most fertile. And thither did my lucky stars, or evil genius, conduct me last Summer, in quest of new adventures and cheap provisions : the latter I was disappointed in, but I hope my Reader will think with me in regard to my *first* motive of rambling.

I boarded at a farm-house, which proved a most fortunate circumstance to me.

One day I went into the dairy for some milk from my landlady, one of my little ones being ill ; and seeing a
bundle

bundle of written papers upon a shelf, eagerly asked what they were.

“La!” said she, “peapers! My husband is executioner to an old gentleman that falled off his horse, and brake his leg, and so un died, but he wrote all thesum peapers.— What a pity! for my husband do say that as how the peaper is very dear, but now as its scrawled on, why its good for nothing, only its main good to put about butter, so I keeps it here tidy to be handy, you see.”

Not to weary the Reader, I will only say, that I did not meet with any great difficulty in a bargain for

thesum papers, as I at once affixed something more than the landlady thought them worth. Upon reading them, I perceived that, in fact, there was still a person who had in reality a prior claim upon my manuscript ; but upon enquiry found that she had also died within the year, and that the old steward had not any other descendants ; so I thought that, in conscience and equity, I might convert to my own use what I had so fairly purchased.

Whether the story is true or false, the Reader will determine for himself. In my mind, it bears stronger marks of authenticity than any novel
- I have

I have yet met with. The Hero and Heroine commit innumerable blunders, if not unpardonable faults ; nay, such as would be improbable for imaginary ones to fall into ; and I cannot, in any part of their conduct, while young, trace that strength of mind and prudence, so common in the *Amelias*, *Prudentias*, and *Eloisas*, yet something of that which, in real life, is the usual result of prudence.

On the other hand, it struck me as a burlesque upon the multitude of ghosts and mysteries, which have excited public curiosity in plays and novels for some years past. I have, however, very much softened that

appearance, if it *was* really so intended, by leaving out, in various places, the fashionable phrases, which occurred too often, of—"Mysterious Heaven! Inscrutable Providence! Divine interposition, &c. &c." Perhaps it may be for the worse, as I am one of a class of beings that *ought*, in order to be qualified for my situation, to be void of feeling, and consequently insensible of taste. I am then, Reader, an Officer's Wife;—unfortunately, the most defenceless of beings, as my husband is now far distant from the comforts of domestic happiness, in the hazardous employment of his country's service; nor is it the first time by many; last
war

war he fought her cause valiantly—and yet, alas ! the decline of life does not promise him those humble enjoyments a generous nation should bestow on such as have deserved well. But why should I complain, since there are hundreds, possessed of as much merit, who have also the same sad prospect?—How little do the great and affluent know the difficulties we have to encounter, when the necessary good appearance of an honourable profession often serves but to disguise the penury and miseries, *more keenly and internally felt.*

I will draw the veil, by just presenting the routine of a married offi-

cer's life ; and appeal to those who have a knowledge of the military line, whether it be overcharged.

An officer is, in general, a disinterested man, and more frequently marries for love than interest. He is a gentleman, and most commonly a man of taste and feeling, which he imprudently proves by marrying a woman of family and accomplishments, and, probably, connexions. But, as my officer, most likely, has no resources but those arising from his commission, his connections are of little avail ; their families, on both sides, are irritated by the *folly* of the young folks, and leave them to the effects

effects of their imprudence. Indeed, it would not be an easy matter for an officer to procure a woman of fortune, as the parents of such as sedulously keep them out of their society, as those of *poor* girls thrust them into it.

To understand the foregoing paragraph, let the Reader look into the ball-rooms of those towns where officers are usually quartered.

But farther to illustrate this observation, I will suppose my officer to be married ; the young couple to be mutually disinterested and affectionate ; that they live with frugality,

and become the parents of a numerous progeny ; he is without money to purchase, or patron to recommend, and is therefore mortified with the sight of junior Ensigns starting over his head ; and even should some promotion realize his wishes, his temper is often soured and chagrined by the perplexing orders of *Field* and *Staff Officers*, which are often more dictated by caprice than necessary military regulation, and calculated only to create unnecessary expence to those little able to bear it. The vexation damps his military ardour ; his debts accumulate, his hopes are frustrated, and with an aching heart he is reluctantly compelled to sell his commission.

He may, perhaps, turn to trade ; but, Reader, did you ever know of an officer succeeding therein ? How should he—for he carries into business the liberal notions which characterize his former profession ; he deals largely, it is true, but then he treats hospitably, trades *honestly*, and trusts generously ; a short time convinces him of his imprudence, yet he cannot, no, he *cannot* bring himself to harass others for debts, the payment whereof might involve them in ruin ; so as somebody *must* be ruined, it ultimately falls upon your former gallant defender. He is dragged to jail. *There*, surrounded by his wife and children, he lingers

awhile in penury, till his earthly pursuits are terminated in a death of misery. Over the fate of his surviving family I gladly throw the veil of silence, lest the World should think I write an accusation.

All I ask for myself is, that the Critics will spare the work now submitted to the Public; it having been suggested more by the necessities of my family than a desire of being known to the World as a writer. I am sensible of its numerous imperfections, but am hopeful that the motive which impelled me to the undertaking will plead something in excuse for its defects; and as having
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ing appropriated the small portion of time I could spare from domestic concerns to family benefit.

If my ideas of a novel are just, this may pass; or, if it amuses, and is not immoral, irreligious, or seditious, every end is answered that Readers expect from the perusal of such publications, and the Editor's ambition amply gratified, who begs leave to subscribe herself,

AN OFFICER'S WIDOW.

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MORE GHOSTS!!!



CHAP. I.

IN a certain part of the northern extremities of Yorkshire, there is a very old pile of building, called — Abbey, supposed to be one of the largest ever erected in England. It had formerly contained within its walls a convent of barefooted friars and another of those vestals usually denominated nuns, beside a church of great magnitude.

The

The walls of this venerable pile are strong, thick, and black; and whatever might have been the former estimation of its beauty, it is now only remarkable for the dismal gloom which overspreads it. Ghosts, as ancient legends tell, may therefore have delighted in making this spot their favourite haunt; for all is uniformly sad and melancholy, whether we view the convent, nunnery, or chapel. Nor in the account of this Gothic structure should be omitted the spacious and awful cymetry, where many an abbot and many a nun had mouldered into dust; but who yet, as thousands will affirm, appear in the same state as that in which they were buried; ay, and clad in the same shrouds that enwrapped their clay-cold bodies, and are seen as regular as the

the owners themselves, together with many other strange appearances, too tedious to enumerate, and unnecessary to mention; but which, mysterious Fate (whose ways every story-book says are inscrutable, even at the time when their heroes are scrutinizing most closely into them) has doomed the following pages to develope.

This Abbey belonged to a worthy, good kind of gentleman, who could trace his genealogy from the time of the Conquest, as the title-deeds of his estate will testify. The Abbey was given to him, or rather his ancestors, during the usurpation of Cromwell, whose father had been a domestic in the family. It was then as easy, with a little interest, to step into a large

large house, as now it is to get into a country-box.

However, in addition to the observation once made by a celebrated auctioneer from his rostrum, "Ladies and gentlemen, things will *wear*!" may be added, that they will also *grow*—out of fashion. This Abbey was a case in point. Upon its first becoming private property, it was adorned with rich hangings, gilt furniture, and all the appendages the custom of those days rendered the necessary decorations of a great man's house; it must consequently have made a very handsome, fashionable appearance in the eyes of our poor ancestors, who are only deemed so from their notions, not from their poverty, and because the most ex-
alted

alted of them never possessed the elegant and refined ideas, we, their more enlightened offspring, seem to inherit from the moment of our birth.

They, indeed, *poor* souls! thought clean straw not only a comfort, but even a luxury, to lay under the feet of Dukes and the highest Nobles; whereas in *our* days, scarcely a cobbler throughout the country will hire a lodging-room that is not *carpetted*!

But, good Reader, let us come back to the Abbey; the cobbler's lodging is an interruption to our story; in truth, it would nothing less than mar it, by preventing the description of a pile of building, as pretty a dismal pile as ever pen
has

has delineated, and which may never again be found in the most luxuriant train of descriptive ideas.

Perfectly to represent the whole would be a fruitless attempt, the following is but an imperfect sketch. That part of the furniture the worm of time had decayed, was in part repaired, part replaced; and as to the rooms themselves, many were *un-inhabited*, some *in-habited*, but all of them *haunted*, at least, if the people in its vicinity spoke the truth.

But strange to tell, nor yet less strange than true, Mr. Morney would never believe in ghosts; it is certain, indeed, he was not a very learned man; and what is more surprizing, the Vicar, who acted
as

as Chaplain, and mostly resided at the Abbey, had no more belief in them than himself, though esteemed as a man of superior education, and a good Christian.



CHAP.



CHAP. II.

THE Gentleman *had* a name, and that a very ancient creditable one, Reginald Morney. He had two sons and one daughter. The youths were gifted with every manly grace, and the daughter's beauty was heightened by an amiable disposition and all the winning attractions of female sweetness. It had often excited wonder that she had not been distinguished by a name more expressive of both her mental and personal accomplishments; as no heroine of either
play

play or romance could possess a juster claim to the pre-eminence, though pictured in all the glowing colours of the most enraptured poet. But, on the contrary, Miss Morney received the most common name at the baptismal font.—She was called Molly by her father, Mary by her brothers, and Madam by every body else.

The young Mr. Morneys were sent to college at a suitable age, but Miss had private tutors at home, owing to her father's irreconcilable hatred to a boarding-school education. He did not, however, restrain her from companions in her studies, lest, as he observed, want of example and emulation might occasion want of diligence. She appeared not to

want

want for any thing ; and her proficiency far exceeded the expectations of her masters. Miss Bolton, the Vicar's daughter, took lessons with Miss Morney, but by no means kept pace with her in the progress she made. They were, notwithstanding, good friends, and the mutual confidants of each other ; they always parted with regret, and met with joy ; and when separated by indisposition, or any other circumstance, (which frequently happened, from Miss Bolton's being subject to the tooth-ache) the most affectionate letters passed between them.

The other juvenile companion was Thomas Grey, a youth about eighteen, at which period my history commences. He was mild and well-behaved ; and
learned

learned pretty well, not only those things in which Miss Morney excelled, such as French, music, and dancing, but likewise in the more masculine studies : he was, indeed, no phenomenon, nor possessed that brilliancy of talents which might augur a future hero.

Young Grey was generally esteemed, and that for many reasons. First, he was a favourite with Mr. Morney ; secondly, he had a civil and polite deportment. To be sure, it was possible to put him into a passion, and then he was ungovernable. Thirdly, he had a handsome face, and bid fair to become a fine figure. There was a striking resemblance in feature between him and Miss Morney, which every body noticed ; and

what made it more remarkable was, that even a mole upon *her* dimples was only the counterpart of one on *his*. Ill-natured people would sometimes insinuate that there were family reasons for this resemblance, and that probably Mr. Morney had not always been a Joseph. But these were mere surmises and idle conjecture; it would therefore ill become an impartial biographer seriously to report them. Whenever these stories reached Mr. Morney's ears, he would exclaim against the censoriousness of the world, and lament that even a man's best actions should be misconstrued or wilfully misrepresented by the malevolent: and as often would he protest that Mr. Grey was not his son; and one day in particular, when pressed hard upon
the

the subject by some witty ladies, who were little scrupulous of what they said, he frankly declared, that so far from Mr. Grey's being his son, he intended him for his son-in-law.

Miss Bolton, who was present, seemed confused, and turned pale on this declaration. Probably she thought Miss Morney might become a formidable rival, when encouraged by her father's sanction, together with the prevailing argument of a large fortune in expectancy; for tho' a daughter, she was heiress to the Abbey estate. It had passed for some time in the female line; and it was possessed by her aunt before it devolved on her father, who had repeatedly declared that Molly and the Abbey should go toge-

ther, as he had enough for the boys independent of it; and would some times facetiously observe, that daughters were children as well as sons, and had equal claims on paternal affection.

Miss Bolton had no great pretensions to beauty; but she was a neat, smart figure, had a cunning look, and a little turn-up nose. She, however, was a complete mistress of every wheedling art, and insinuating manners. Certainly her friendship for Miss Morney became stronger and stronger, which afforded some proof of her disinterestedness, as there was little doubt but she felt an attachment towards young Grey.

Indeed,

Indeed, she was now very seldom from the Abbey, and mostly slept with her dear Mary. In this society, she made herself so agreeable, that the whole family, even Grey himself, were charmed with her sense and good humour.

Among the other occasional visitors at the Abbey was a Miss de Burgh, who was frequently there, and likewise much esteemed by Grey and Miss Morney; but all of a sudden, and without any cause being assigned, she discontinued her visits, except when she came in great form, with her father and mother, once a month; and on these occasions the young people could never get her, as formerly, from her mother's side, either to chat, walk, or romp; and if Thomas sat by

her, seemingly with a wish to entertain her, either Mr. Morney or Mr. de Burgh would call him away upon some pretence or other ; not that Grey had conceived any affection, or formed any design upon her ; the conduct of the old folks, however, arose from such a suspicion on their part ; it was too apparent not to be remarked by him ; in consequence of which he ceased to pay her any other attention than what the laws of good-breeding and politeness required—simply a bow upon her entrance, and another at her departure.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

MISS BOLTON was so very friendly to Tom, that it was not possible for him to deny her his confidence, of which she availed herself to feed in his mind suspicions of the conduct of his benefactor, Mr. Morney.

Tom had been educated so entirely at home, that no wonder need be excited from his being credulous to excess, particularly inclined to the miraculous, and

easily imposed upon by the artful and designing. He was not, therefore, one of the unbelievers of the family; for though as yet no spirits had discovered themselves to *him*, yet he could not doubt the well-attested stories, in the report of which there was a general concurrence of opinion throughout the house. Hitherto he had only heard strange noises, which Miss Bolton assured him must mean something. She gave many shrewd hints that certain circumstances relating to him would be elucidated one day or other, either by the living or by the dead.

"I myself," said she one day, "could inform you, but you would blab—and

your father—bless me! I mean Mr. Morney—would forbid me the house, and I should be deprived of your society.”

“Could you tell me, my dear Betsy,” said Grey, “you would not only oblige me, but I will swear never to betray you.”

“Nor do any thing,” said she, “without consulting me.”

“I do promise—nay, more, will swear, and that most solemnly.”

“Well then, first, tell me who you believe yourself to be, where your parents are, and what are your expectations, as we are here strangers to these

particulars, from the circumstance of your having been bred in obscurity, and generally considered as an object of charity."

"Why," replied Grey, "on these points I cannot satisfy you, for they are a mystery to myself. I never saw, to my remembrance, any other home than this Abbey; relations I was never blessed with, nor did I ever feel the want of them; Mr. Morney has acted the part of a father by me."

"How ominous are your words!" said Miss Bolton, "but go on."

After changing countenance, and flashing with surprise, Grey continued—

"I have

"I have been in a particular manner distinguished by him: his own sons are sent out for their education, while I am the happy companion of Mary Morney. Sweet girl! how I pitied her brothers when they gave her a farewell embrace. No, I would not change my situation to be Edward Morney, the wealthy heir to ten thousand a year."

"Beware of incest!" said Miss Bolton, in a tremulous voice.

Grey would have testified his surprise and horror by words as well as by looks, but she disappeared so suddenly, that he could not.

"Ominous words!" said he to himself, and "beware of incest!"—What can she mean?—Is it possible that I?—Oh, no, it is not possible.—Mr. Morney is the best of men, therefore I cannot be brother to Miss Morney—my angelic Mary!" exclaimed he.

Here a bell sounded thrice, deep and hollow. He started, and was leaving the room to seek Miss Bolton, but met her returning; the rest of the family were gone to Holt, upon a visit to the De Burghs.

"What is the matter?" said she, perceiving horror in his countenance, "have my words already made so great an impression?—Alas! I was overcome myself,

incest!"

and

and forced to withdraw, in hope of gaining strength of mind sufficient for this solemn occasion.

Grey would willingly have excused her from these kind exertions; he dreaded to learn what he could not bear to think of; but supposing that it would look unmanly, or even worse, to remain in ignorance of those things that concerned himself to know; he kept his eyes fixed upon her countenance, as if expecting her to begin, but his tongue was silent.

“Know then,” said she, looking round her, “that three times I have dreamt a female, in a white shroud, came to my bed-side, and said, ‘Warn Thomas Grey, warn Thomas Grey, bid him beware of incest!’”

incest!"—Now, my dear Grey, I should not have disturbed you with my dreams, though three times repeated, only that last night she again came, frowned as she appeared to me, and said, "Why do you hesitate to warn my son? He is surrounded by those whose mistaken love will plunge him into ruin. Rise to-morrow, look behind your bed, raise the tapestry, open the door, and in the next room you will find my picture concealed beneath some lumber; let the evidence of that induce you to remember what I have said, and warn Thomas Grey!"

"I have moved the bed and raised the tapestry, and saw a door, but I was afraid to open it, and enter by myself, as it evidently appears to be more immediately
your

your duty to explore, and, if possible, discover the mystery. You will not, I am sure, refuse to accompany me."

"No, certainly," replied he, pale as ashes, "but not to-night."

"To-morrow the family will return, and may discover us; now is our time."

Reluctantly did Grey take up a light to attend the resolute Bolton, who followed, but, in spite of all her courage, trembled very much. When they arrived at her chamber, they moved the great old-fashioned tester bed with difficulty. Grey observed it with surprise, and said—

Miss

"Miss Bolton, you informed me you had done this yourself—Whence is it that we both now find it a task of so much difficulty?"

"It is all amazing," said she, "but, in the name of Heaven, let us proceed."

They went to work again, and succeeded. They found the tapestry as described to Miss Bolton in her dream; this was raised, and then the wonderful door appeared in view; it is natural to suppose great consternation was excited in them both by the discovery.

Miss Bolton first recovered from the effects of the surprize, (indeed she was always a girl of spirit and resolution)

and

and encouraged her companion to aid her efforts in obtaining an entrance: it was not very difficult to open as much of the door as would admit them singly, but their united strength was insufficient to open it wide enough to admit them both at once, and this adventurous pair wished to go in together, lest, it may be supposed, any frightful appearance should overcome the resolution of whichever ventured singly. They, therefore, made another effort, more violent than the former, upon which a most violent noise was heard, just as if a suit of armour had fallen on a stone pavement; the crash frightened them both so much, that they again united their strength to shut the door, gazing silently and piteously on one another.

The

The armour made no more noise; and Grey now felt a stronger desire to explore the mystery. Curiosity sometimes strongly predominates even in the breast of a man; but, perhaps, young Grey might in a more particular manner have felt its influence, from the circumstance of his having been educated with girls, and mostly in the habit of associating in female company.

Their resolution began to strengthen; the door was again half opened, and Grey entered first, closely followed by Miss Bolton.

Three descending steps led to the room, which was stately and spacious. When at the bottom, they gazed around, though

though not without some degree of trepidation; the candle did not seem to give them a sight of the whole room; they kept close by the wall while endeavouring to explore its extent, holding sometimes by pieces of ragged tapestry in those places where it had remained. Their steps were neither firm nor quick, but they at length got to a heap of rubbish in a corner of the room; it consisted chiefly of rotten tapestry, plaister, mortar, and broken glass. Miss Bolton was rejoiced at this circumstance, as her anxious mind foreboded it would lead to some important discovery.

“Here,” said she, “this must be the spot—let us search here.”

Grey

Grey looked timidly round, and setting down the candle, began to stir the rubbish about with his foot; but after being a few minutes thus occupied, which his timidity had magnified into so many hours, he manifested a strong inclination to retire.

“There is not any thing here, (quoth he) Betsey, it is time to be gone.”

“Let me try,” said Betsey, and went to work more resolutely. In a short time she called out—“Bravo! I was right; we have got our treasure, and produced to Tom’s astonished eyes the miniature of a beautiful lady.

“This,” I remember her very well; and I am

"This," continued Miss Bolton, "is the exact copy of those features which have so often appeared to me—O Grey, how much like you are they!—the eyes, the nose, the mole on the temples—only there is a noble, or rather haughtiness of expression, that is much softened in your's."

Grey gazed at the picture in his turn, and examined it with the minutest attention—

"Well," said he, "this may be my mother's picture, but how strong a resemblance does it bear to Mary Morney?—Her eyes, her nose, and the mole on *her* temple.—It is not at all like Mrs. Morney; I remember her very well; and

I am

I am at a loss to think how this picture can prove Mr. Morney to be my father. No, I will not believe a word of it."

Miss Bolton looked disappointed, but turned towards the door of her apartment, carrying a light with her. All at once a piece of tapestry, which she held in her hand, gave way, and the poor girl fell down, and extinguished the candle. The room being thus rendered dark, and no guide to direct their trembling steps, Miss Bolton, in attempting to raise herself up, caught hold of one of Tom's legs, and pulled so hard, as to bring him to the ground with a violence that bruised him, and prevented his exertions for a few minutes. When he would have got up, he felt something hard under his hand,

hand, which judging to be the picture, he put it into his pocket, apostrophizing rather ungraciously upon the trouble it had occasioned him, when the bell again tolled three times, just as if it were over his head.

"This is astonishing," said he, very softly, and then he called loudly for lights, having entirely forgot the delicacy of his situation, and the secrecy it was indispensably necessary he should strictly observe.

It was, however, fortunate for Grey that none of the servants were within hearing; but even if they had, not one of them would have ventured into a room against which their prejudices were

so

so strong, from an idea that it was the abode of ghosts !

Miss Bolton, who got up at the very instant Grey fell, had fortunately got out of the chamber before the dismal tolling of the bell, and was by this time returned with a light, for the purpose of conducting him to the more chearful parts of the Abbey.

On her entering the apartment, she found him groping about, panting with fright, and moving in quite a contrary direction to the right one. He poured forth the strongest effusions of gratitude for her timely assistance in extricating him from his troubles, and returned with her to the parlour.

It

It was now near midnight, and Miss Bolton prudently observed, it would not be proper for them to remain longer together, but promised to meet him early in the morning.



CHAP. IV.

YOUNG Grey had enough now to occupy his attention. When he had retired to his own apartment, he took the precaution of desiring his man to sleep in the adjoining apartment, and left the door unlocked which communicated between them; and when he supposed the fellow was asleep, he took the picture from his pocket more minutely to examine it, upon which the more attentively he looked the more he was bewildered.

“ It

“It is something like Mary,” said he, “but not enough so to be her’s—on this brow fits pride, but upon Mary’s, love and tendernefs. Are you my mother, or are you but some fictitious resemblance thrown in my way to deceive my senses and disturb my quiet?”

“How happy are those,” he would again say, “who are blessed with parents? But, above all, how happy the youth, who in difficulty or distress, has an affectionate mother to console him, and on whose tender bosom he can repose his aching head?—To whom he can with confidence and security open the secrets of his bursting heart—look up with the fond emotion of filial love to her anxious, maternal countenance,

beaming comfort to his soul, while her lips give utterance to the soothing condolence of heavenly advice. "Oh, mother! wert thou now in being, thou, surely, wouldst not look with such haughtiness on your son as mark the features of this picture!"

"After a momentary pause, he again exclaimed—"But what has this to do with Miss Morney?—I must endeavour, without betraying Betsey, to find her father."

Such was the result of Grey's deliberations; till, at last, wearied with reflection and fatigue, he endeavoured to compose himself to sleep, in the vain hope of enjoying its balmy comfort."

In

He arose in the morning betimes, but not so early as Miss Bolton, who he found waiting for him. She took hold of his hand with all the tenderness of friendship, and earnestly enquired about his health.

Grey withdrew his hand, and said—
“Pray, Betsey, keep your dreams to yourself in future; by revealing them you have made me unhappy, suspicious, and done no good.”

“What,” said she, “can you still doubt, after so many supernatural tokens? When do such wonders happen, but to throw a light on some mystery? And when such information is given us by the means of divine agency, for the

future regulation of our lives, it is our duty to avail ourselves of it."

"That there is more than nature in the events of last night is certain," said Grey, "but no dial pointed at Morney; the spirit might as well have meant Miss de Burgh, or you."

"Fie upon you!" interrupted she, "me, whose father is a clergyman! how can you have such profane suspicions?"

"I do not, indeed, suspect it, Betty," said Grey, "I wish not to suspect any one; but a clergyman is only a man, and Mr. Morney is a good man, which, surely gives him as just a claim to be exempt

empt from suspicion. Then, you know Mary Morney is such an angelic creature ! how should I be brother to so much perfection !”

“ Ah !” said Betsey, “ there’s the rub—you have conceived an affection for Miss Morney which you would vainly endeavour to conceal ; but I fear it is a love sinful in its nature, and such, as if persisted in may terminate in the misery of you both ; and Heaven knows I would gladly lay down my life to serve either you or Miss Morney.”

The tears, which rolled down her cheeks bore ample testimony to the truth of her tender expressions, and melted the

D 4

heart

heart of Grey, who promised that he would do nothing rashly, but, in future, behave less like a lover to Miss Morney, waiting for time and circumstances to elucidate the wonderful events of the night.



CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

MR. MORNEY returned before dinner. Grey was hastily running to hand Miss Morney from the chariot, but got a check from Miss Bolton.

“Refrain your ardour,” said she, “and whenever you forget yourself, behold in me your second conscience to warn you, if but by my looks, against error and every injurious propensity you may occasionally feel.”

Grey would much rather his *second* conscience had not held him so tight, or so inaptly enforced an observance of her injunctions; and the Morney's, therefore, entered the room without any ceremony. He did not salute Miss Morney with his usual compliments, but passing her with a low bow, he went and laid hold of her father's hand, which was not usual when both were in company. There could be no doubt which hand he wished to press, but he was not here left to the freedom of his choice.

"I believe our Grey is a little affronted, Papa," said Mary, "see how disdainful he looks. What ails you, Tommy?—What have you done to him in my absence, Betsey?"

"No

"No harm, I promise you," replied Miss Bolton.

"Well then, sit down both of you, and listen to my cargo of news, and you shall hear a true and particular account of what detained us all night. Was you afraid, Grey, that I should never return?—Who could leave a place where the senses were confounded, if not enchanted, by the divine power of music?—You think that I, silly girl as I am, play the forte piano well, and sing charmingly; but, Lord help you, you have no taste; I do not play in the least like Miss Holden; besides, I heard a gentleman tell her that she excelled every thing he ever heard; and Mr. de Rough himself said it was *charming*. To be sure, it was

not her fault if she did not play correct ; for whenever a difficult passage occurred she began again. She played *Alley Croaker*, and roared it so audibly, that the children in the nursery were all frightened, and *roared* too, which added something to the concert, I can assure you.

“ Then the three Miss Tofts, from Sheffield, where they have been for their education, stood up with their hands before them, and sung together something about love, but the faces they made were wonderful ; they began in piano, which, it seems, means to stretch the mouth gradually to its greatest power of extension, and from time to time issue a murmuring noise, which I could not hear

hear distinctly; and when all their mouths were opened together, they gave a sudden squall, as if they had been stuck at the same instant, and that they kept up nobly, which it seems was *forte*. What pleased me most was the modest, yet assumed dignity, with which they received the applauses of the company; some others played and sung more in my own way, so I pass them by."

"And you!"

"Yes, Tommy, I played, and sung your favourite air; some honest, well-meaning men were about to compliment me on my performance; but in this I stopped them, observing, that after the Miss Tofts and Miss Holden, it could only

only be flattery to me, as I was conscious of my own inferiority.

“The Gentlemen smiled, and Miss Holden said, in a condescending manner, “Oh, Miss, you play very well.”—After this we began dancing, then to supper, then to bed, then home, and here we are not welcome—Ah! Grey—”

He took her hand, and was raising it to his lips, when Miss Bolton stared in his face, and he dropped it. Mary felt a little chagrined as well as Grey; and many similar things of a nature equally unpleasant to the young couple happened in the course of the day, from the *looking hints* of his self-appointed monitor.

At

At last, after supper, Miss Morney said, "Surely, Grey, you will not continue this odd humour any longer. If it really vexes you that I was amused out of your company, be assured I am only *quite* happy when in it. I never thought you could be so naught—Come, make haste and be good, lest I too catch the infection, and become sullen for a week."

She held out her hand, which he rapturously kissed, and, having once broke bounds, almost devoured. While the young folks were engaged in this tender dalliance, Mr. Morney was diverting himself in play with his favourite dog Rover; Miss Bolton looked at them with anger, but Grey would not return a fingle

single glance, and Mary seemed quite confounded.

Mr. and Miss Morney then retired, happy and comfortable within themselves, while Grey and Miss Bolton were downright wretched, though from different causes; for one wished to make mischief, to which the other was already half a victim.



CHAP. VI.

NEXT morning Grey was up by day-break, and, with his mother's picture in his hand, he sauntered into the garden.

Old John, the gardener, who had been always accustomed to early rising, was examining some alterations which had been recently made. It struck the mind of our youth, that servants, notwithstanding their menial condition, might possess a reasoning faculty equal to their superiors,

riors, and therefore, that this John, having lived all his life in the family, might be able to give him some information respecting his parents. Impressed with this idea, he entered into a familiar conversation with his old acquaintance.

“ John, how did you rest last night ? ”

“ Why, rather better, Measter Grey, than the night before : one would ’most ’magine that thesum ghoasts knowd as how that measter was abroad t’other night, they kept up such a ringing, and the housemaids heard them cry murder, and we heard a clinking of chains, and the dog barked—Oh dear ! oh dear ! there have been fad doings, folks do say, in this here house ; but once in, there’s

no

no getting out, not that I wants to go, not I—Meafter is very good, and my work a pleasure, and—”

“What doings do you mean have been in this house?—You need not fear Mr. Morney’s anger, I will not divulge what you may say.”

“Why then, Meafter Grey, come further from the alcove—Speak softly, for fear of listeners, and I’ll tell som’at.”

“Here then I have removed; and do not wish to speak at all, or by any means in the world interrupt you, if you, dear John, will but satisfy my impatient curiosity.”

“Why

“Why then, I have heard from very sensible people that a lady was ravished in the very room next to where Miss Bolton sleeps. I am sure I would sooner lie in the garden than sleep there all night; for if so be the ghost has taken a spite to mankind, as mayhap she has, she might do un an ill turn.”

Grey was so thunderstruck, that he paid but little attention to the gardner's simple observations—“Could my father,” he exclaimed, “be such a vil—, bad man!”

“Your father knows nothing of it, as I verily believe; nor, for that matter, can he be blamt.”

“And

“And my poor mother, what has become of her? Tell me, dear John, is not this her picture?—Alas! what an unfortunate child am I, only to have known one of my parents, and that one to be so faulty!”

The gardener looked at the picture with marks of astonishment, then steadfastly at Grey, and at last exclaimed—
“So the secret is now out; I always said you would get suspicious, and that they must tell you—Ay, it is the very moral of her, poor woman; she was mortal proud though, if I may take the liberty of saying as much, but there was odd goings on about her too—Why, would you think it, Measter Grey, they were
foreed

forced to take her off in a coach, and, indeed, carried her to it, and conveyed her into some foreign land?—What a-do there was one night, ay, about one in the morning, she did so struggle, and grind her teeth, and moan, and scream—My hair stood an end!

“And was that all you did for her?” said Grey.

“Why, Lord, Measter Grey, what would you have?—I did pity her, to be sure, but I believe she frightened me most; and there was her husband and her brother both agreed upon it, and so, who could gainsay it; beside, they were ‘fear’d of the lad.”

Oh!

"Oh! the cruel men!" said Grey,
"Her brother too!—What could he
say?"

"He said as how she was a disgrace to
the family; and something, I cannot
rightly say, about some one's being hang-
ed—"

"Her husband said you?—Then she
was married?" quoth Grey.

"Ay, sure," said the gardener, "that
is the worst part of the tale, for—"

Here Miss Bolton was seen approach-
ing, and John stopped his conversation,
begging young Grey to keep it a secret,
and went about his business.

Miss

Miss Bolton found the poor youth much disordered, and almost unable to support himself to a seat. She procured him some water to bathe his forehead, applied her salts, rubbed his hands, and was glad to see him burst into tears, which probably was the only thing which saved him from fainting.

“What is the matter, Grey?” said she, “is your attachment to your sister so very strong, that you almost faint at the idea?”

“Believe me, Betsey,” replied Grey, “when I tell you, that at the time you met me I had not a thought of Mary, dear as she is to my heart. Oh, no, mother!” looking at the picture, “you
alone

alone engrossed my whole ideas at that moment." He again burst into tears.

"Tell me, Grey, has she really appeared to you?"

"Oh, no; would I could see her, if only for a moment, I should have no fearful apprehension from the spirit of one so dear to my sorrowing mind.—Oh, mother, if indeed you are permitted to visit the earth, shew that favour to your afflicted son!—It will assuage the sorrow of my distracted mind, and open a ray of comfort to my cheerless hope—It will alleviate the painful recollection of your sufferings on earth, in contemplating the happiness you now enjoy in the regions of everlasting bliss!"

Miss Bolton wished to know what gave rise to these ejaculations, but he refused to gratify her curiosity, saying he was not at liberty to inform her; and besides the secret was of such a nature, as to render it equally imprudent and improper to make a disclosure to any person.

POOR Grey was much to be pitied—his heart was rent in the severest conflict it had to sustain between disappointed love and parental misfortune. Sometimes he felt himself criminal, in that not being Mr. Mornay's atrocious behaviour to his mother, he could not help loving him, and even felt an abhorrence at the thought of taxing him with his ill usage of the Lady, or his dissipated conduct in meditating a marriage to very sinful. At other times

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CHAP. VII.

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he would wish he had been kept in profound ignorance of the matter, and even endeavour to convince himself that there was no crime in marrying a sister, and that the Scripture did not absolutely forbid it in all cases; and that in our days, by turning Roman Catholic, the thing was rendered perfectly easy. At all events he would try to make himself comfortable in the idea that he might still love her, and as to marrying, he would endeavour to banish it from his thoughts.

But, alas! soon was he convinced of the weakness of his resolutions—the thoughts of his dear Mary he could not banish from his mind, and the uncertain fate of his mother was still a source of perplexity

perplexity and uneasiness to him. One moment he would determine to require an account of Mr. Morney, and the next deem it best to do nothing rashly. He at length determined to feign sickness, and keep his room; accordingly he did not appear at breakfast the following morning, which, though noticed, was not spoken of; but when at the dinner hour he sent a message, informing that illness occasioned his absence, the whole family were thrown into the greatest consternation.

“ Sick ! and I not know it ! ” exclaimed Miss Morney.

A similar ejaculation was uttered by Mr. Morney, who was at a loss to con-

ceive why he had not been sooner apprized of the matter.

Miss Bolton rightly guessed it was his mind that was disordered, and felt some sorrow in having been the cause of interrupting the innocent mirth and conviviality which usually presided at that hospitable table.

"I'll go and see him," said Miss Morney, rising.

"No, I will go," said her father, being a bit of a physician, "I am the only proper person, and will bring you a true account. You know when Tom is a little indisposed, which, thank my stars, is seldom the case, he always is low spirited.

spirited, I should not wonder to see him with his foot on a cushion, if only a nail had run into it.

"Ah, Papa," replied Mary, "you are happy in never having suffered much through illness; and, therefore, you do not know how much poor Thomas may actually suffer at those times when you suppose him *hipped*—Do go see him Papa, or let me."

Mr. Morney smiled at his beloved Molly, and went to see his patient, whom he found sitting in a window, considering within himself whether Miss Morney would feel any concern for his absence. The features of the old gentleman were marked with benevolence, though he ad-

ressed him in strains of the greatest pleasure—

“Are you lame again in your toe, Thomas?—Or have you another sprain in your little finger, that you sit here in solitary state?—Come down, I pronounce, that chearful company and a good dinner will do you more service than any nostrum in my nostrum chest.

“No, Sir,” said Grey, “I am unable to appear below to-day—Pray excuse me.”

“No, Sir,” repeated Mr. Morney, “methinks you are unusually polite, but still, I must know your complaint, or have your assistance to entertain them

wild

wild girls, who will pull me to atoms, if I do not procure an helpmate to support me. I suppose if I had allowed Molly to come for you, you would have been easier prevailed upon, but I would look in upon you first myself."

Grey suffered himself to be led off, unwillingly, as he wished it to be thought; but when he met Miss Morney, with extended hand, and softened, sympathetic countenance, he vainly endcavoured to conceal his satisfaction; he forgot his sickness while answering her kind enquiries; his eyes, before so dim, again sparkled with love and tenderness, till Miss Bolton, by treading on his toe, recalled his recollection to the conditions he had imposed upon himself, notwith-

standing the attention of Miss Morney, and the facetious jokes of the old gentleman, to divert him.

An esteemed Poet has with much justice observed, that

Men are but children of a larger growth.

This was truly illustrated in the conduct of Grey, who proved himself so much of a child, that all their coaxing and caressing only tended to continue his perseverance in the melancholy part he had assumed; and the whole family noticed that his dullness increased in proportion as they exerted themselves to dispel it.

Miss Morney played on her forte piano most exquisitely, but even the power

power of music seemed to have no influence on the spirits of Grey, who still kept up all the solemn dignity of silent thoughtfulness.

At supper, Miss Bolton took an opportunity, when Miss Morney had turned her head aside, to slip the following note into Grey's hand—

"Meet me to-night at eleven at the
"end of the long gallery."

"Will you meet me?" she whispered,
and pressed his hand.

Grey, fearful of being overheard, only said Yes, and then repented; for the long gallery was a frightful place; it led to

the great aisle of the Chapel, and there were dungeons under it; but Betsey was possessed of undaunted courage, and could be intimidated by no kind of danger.

At half after ten this regular family always retired to their apartments, so that Grey had no difficulty in going unperceived to the long gallery, excepting an accident which frightened him a little, as it might have done any other person.

He was going up a staircase, when looking below, he saw a glimmering light; he knew the passage formed no part of the house which was lighted in common; he therefore stopped to consider whether he should retreat or go forward.

forward. While in this perplexing dilemma, he heard an awful voice say—
“You should have done it to-night.”

“I had not the heart,” replied another hoarse voice; kill him yourself to-morrow, since Mr. Morney ordered it; but I am sure Miss will be mortal sorry.”

“Oh, Heavens!” said Tom, “what can all this mean?” and was about to go back; but hearing a trampling of feet behind him, he was rooted to the spot, and in a moment discovered two figures at the foot of the stairs, clad in white, when his ears were saluted with the sound of “Master Grey! Master Grey!” from the mouth of the cook, who had thus alarmed him by talking with the under game-

game-keeper, concerning the death of a favourite hind, which had been bred by Miss Morney.

Grey made some trifling excuse for being seen so far distant from his chamber at that hour; the cook was easily satisfied, and our hero proceeded along the gallery.

The undertaking, however, required all Tom's fortitude. The place of rendezvous was, in some degree, calculated to inspire melancholy, at least in the breast of one like Tom, who had no great pretension to courage.

On the one side were large, old-fashioned window-frames, filled with modern

dern fashes; the opposite side was covered with whole lengths of Knights in armour, others in wigs, and ladies with ruffs and fardingales, or some less antique, with large ruffles down to their wrists. They were spread all over the wall, and formed rather a grotesque appearance; Grey, however, passed these without discomposure, and safely arrived at the place of appointment.

Miss Bolton was waiting for him. Her first action was to blow out the light he brought with him, by which he was disconcerted, until he perceived that she was provided with a small lantern; this she thought would answer their purpose better—"For," said she, "I propose to walk along the Chapel, where we shall

shall be in less danger of discovery than in any other part of the house ; and we are so closely watched in the day time, that there is no speaking to you."

"Nay, Betsey," said Grey, "I never perceived that any one was watched at Morney Abbey. Formerly suspicion was a stranger to us all. But what have you now to say to me, that we must wander about the Chapel before you can disclose it. Oh! that you never had communicated to me what you have!—Before that I was happy, but fear I never shall be so again."

"I understand you," said Miss Bolton, disdainfully, "you wish to marry her whom you ought not to think of."

"True,"

"True," said he, "I should not think of her, for a wounded conscience would be worse than a wounded heart. But tell me now what I am to hear, though I almost dread to listen."

"Why," said Betsey, without any reserve, "I can think of nothing but you—no wonder the same image should haunt my dreams."

"You are too partial," replied Grey, with a low bow.

"Not so, but very faithful. Listen then—Last night, after sitting up until midnight, I was leaning upon the little table with both hands, when my wearied head dropped upon them, and I fell asleep,

asleep; thus for a few minutes did I forget my cares, till I was awoke by a deep founding bell, which founded thrice."

"Ah!" said Grey, "that's the bell I heard, though not last night."

"Yes, it was *your bell*," interrupted Miss Bolton, in solemn tones, "but founded last night only for me. Judge, however, my surprize and horror, when I saw lying before me, nay, under my hand, a writing in a supernatural hand, the words—"Let Thomas Grey shun his sifter, until he finds a wife that shall comfort him." Here is the paper." I staggered to the door to see if it was fastened, and found it carefully bolted as I myself had made it when I entered the
room.

room. You know the windows are so high, that it was impossible to suppose human beings could find entrance by them; so what could I think but that your dear departed mother cannot find rest for her spirit, while you are in danger of aggravating her crime by your own conduct."

"Let me tell you," said Grey, "that my mother was no criminal; she was married."

"To whom," said Miss Bolton.

"I do not know," hesitated Grey, "but I suppose to my father, whoever he was."

"Then,"

"Then you will not believe Mr. Morney to be your father, for he was publicly known to be husband to the late Mrs. Morney for years before you were born, and his eldest son is older than you by two years."

"I declare," said Grey, "I am so bewildered with different stories, that I shall lose my senses. What do you say, that I am to leave this place, and not to see the friends I have always loved? Was a brother ever before prevented from seeing his sister, allowing her, according to your account, which is very improbable, to be so?—The conditions you prescribe to me are harsh and severe—What! to leave every friend?"

"No,

"No, not every friend," said Betsey, pressing his hand very kindly, "you have one that will follow you in all your misfortunes, who will support you amidst your virtuous struggles, cheer you in your distress, and still be satisfied if but able to make you comfortable."

"Who, who is this good creature?" said Grey; but no, it cannot, must not be Miss Morney."

"Oh, no," said Betsey, "it is no common love will prompt such exertion—But in me behold one who would risk the greatest danger for you."

Here she would have thrown herself into his arms had she found them ready

to

to receive her; but finding the reverse she embraced him in her's, which Grey reluctantly endured.

Mortified by the coldness with which Grey received her embrace, Miss Bolton gave a scream, and complained of being hurt. He for some time stood confounded, but was at length moving to return to the house, when his steps were suddenly checked by the appearance of a spectre, which almost petrified him.

He saw distinctly issue from a small grove that adjoined the cymetry, a figure robed in white, and luminous; its mouth was open, its eyes staring; one hand supported the robe, while the other

was

was held up in a posture that conveyed the idea of a threat.

After the interval of a few seconds, a hoarse and dreadful voice called out, in slow and deliberate words, "Shun Morney Abbey!"

Betsey fainted on the spot; and poor Grey, staggering to assist her, fell down likewise without sense or motion. Betsey soon revived, and used her best endeavours to recover Grey, who opening his eyes, and beholding the ghost coming towards him, as he thought, he gave a loud cry, and again fainted.

Miss Bolton was much alarmed, being incapable of bringing him into the house herself,

herself, and afraid of alarming the family; she rubbed his temples and his hands, called upon him, uttered Miss Morney's name, but all without effect; his pulses seemed not to beat; and believing him to be actually dead, she ran to awake the servants.



CHAP. VIII.

THE chambermaid, in the greatest agitation, and trembling like an aspen leaf in the wind, awoke Mr. Morney, and told him she much feared that Mr. Grey was dead, just by the Chapel wall.

The good man started up, put his feet into his slippers, and ran out of his room towards the long gallery. On his way he was met by two servants, attended by Miss Bolton, bearing the body of this un-

VOL. I.

F

fortunate

fortunate young man, which he ordered to be carried to the bed he himself had just left, and dispatched one of his domestics for a surgeon. He sat down by the bed-side, sincerely lamenting the fate of Grey, and dreading the effect it might have on the mind of his beloved Mary, emphatically observing—"I shall lose her too!"

By the time the surgeon arrived, unequivocal signs of life appeared; and upon being bled, his returning senses diffused universal joy among his lamenting friends; he looked around wildly, but did not speak.

The surgeon desired he might be kept quiet, as on that his speedy recovery would

would chiefly depend, and attributed his disorder to some sudden and powerful emotion of the mind, which possibly might have produced a fatal termination, had he not been speedily attended to.

Every one now became solicitous to trace the cause of poor Tom's disaster. The chambermaid was interrogated as to her knowledge of the matter, it appearing singular she should be on that spot at so late an hour, and in so critical a moment.

The chambermaid had been tutored by Miss Bolton what answer to give should any enquiry be made of her.— She, therefore, accounted for her being present by saying, that being in bed,

and fast asleep, she dreamt that Grey was dying just by the old Chapel wall ; she awoke in a fright, and tried to compose herself again, as she recollected the butler had said, that Mr. Morney did not allow any of his servants to believe in dreams, apparitions, or such like things ; but, at last, thinking she heard some person groan, she rose up, and going to the place she had dreamt of, she beheld Mr. Grey lying dead as she thought, and instantly ran to get assistance.

Such was the substance of Sukey's deposition ; but Mr. Morney asked her how she came to be so compleatly dressed, as even to have on her day-cap, and every thing else the same as if it had been daytime, when she rose in such a fright?

The

The girl being little prepared for such close interrogation, hesitated a good deal in her answer, and said she was so much frightened when putting on her cloaths, that she knew not what she was about.

Mr. Morney asked her where she got a light?

Sukey said that she had no light, and intimated a belief that her cloaths had been put on by some wonderful means, which she could not account for.

Mr. Morney then asked what wages were due to her; of which being informed, he paid them down, with something over, at the same time ordered the butler to keep her in sight till day-light, and

then send her out of the house, as he observed she must be a hardened impostor to persist in such a story of deception, with so affecting a scene immediately before her eyes.

Poor Sukey, with tears in her eyes, begged forgiveness, but still persisted in the same story, though Miss Bolton took her by the hand, and in the presence of all the company begged she would say nothing but the truth.

She was, however, sent away next morning, to the great grief of her fellow-servants, who could not help believing the plausible story she had told, together with many additional circumstances she was continually recollecting,
to

to the satisfaction of her credulous auditors, who observed that it was very hard upon a poor servant to lose her place for telling the truth, and saving a fellow-creature's life.

Indeed several in the family, besides the domestics, could not help giving some degree of credit to Sukey's relation of the story, though they would not venture to say so, knowing Mr. Morney to be only inflexible where he thought he had just reason to be so.

Next day Grey was better ; no fever, but great languor, and such a sadness seemed to overpower him, that he could hardly bear the light ; he kept his eyes mostly close, except when Miss Morney

happened to come into the room, then he would half open them to take a glance at her; which was observed with satisfaction by every body.

One time, in a gentle tone of voice, she said to him—"My dear Grey, what is the matter with you?"—His answer shocked and surprized her.

"I am dying of a broken heart!" replied he.

"My goodness! dear Grey," rejoined she, "what distresses you? Is it possible that you have changed either your opinion of my love for you, or altered your mind with regard to the object of your affections?"

"Oh,

"Oh, no, indeed, Mary, neither one nor the other; but I am an unhappy youth; if I live, I shall cause unhappiness to those I love, and be myself wretched—I therefore wish to die."

Miss Bolton, who was in the room, obliged the lovers to separate, though with evident reluctance on both sides, by reminding them of the surgeon's prohibition.

"You are very imprudent," said she to Miss Morney, to allow him to converse at all, when his health, nay, his very life is at stake; and, besides, don't you perceive it disturbs him, and that he is quite incoherent in his expressions?"

"Yes, indeed, I hope so," replied the weeping young Lady, "even *that* is better than to believe he speaks truly. But now let me return to watch by the bedside; indeed, Betsey, I will not disturb him by speaking."

Betsey knew, however, that if she did not speak she would look, and that Grey could not be easy while he saw her; so at last she prevailed on Miss Morney to permit *her* to return and sit with the nurse, giving many promises of attention and diligence, and that she would instantly bring an account of any change that might happen, whether for the better or the worse, and to relate minutely the most trifling circumstance that should take place; and, above all, particularly
to

to note every word or expression that might escape his lips, and report them with fidelity and exactness to Miss Morney.

Prevailed upon by these assurances, Mary agreed to retire, and went to accompany her father, to whom she most religiously communicated every syllable that passed in conversation between her and Grey.

Mr. Morney agreed in opinion with Miss Bolton, that Grey's mind was rather deranged by his sickness; but, at the same time, he entertained an opinion that the whole had been produced by some hidden cause, which he conceived,

if once developed, might tend to facilitate his recovery.

What impressed the old gentleman's mind with this idea was the melancholy discernible in Grey on the preceding day, the cook's account of meeting him, and his being found near the Chapel wall. These several circumstances considered, in his mind, denoted there was something at the bottom which Grey wished to conceal from Mary, till the oppression of his mind had overpowered his strength.

At other times, Mr. Morney was inclined to believe the whole had arisen from an intrigue between Grey and the chamber-

chambermaid, and would not be surprized at hearing of poor discarded Sukey's being in a state of pregnancy.

Grey was, however, perfectly innocent of this suspected crime; but so it is, that ill-grounded suspicion will sometimes find an entrance into the best of minds.



At other times Mr. Morrey was inclined to believe the whole had arisen from an intrigue between Grey and the chambermaid.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THe ensuing night was a melancholy one to all parties; but Grey is now the more immediate object of consideration. He, in order to be the less interrupted in his meditations feigned to be asleep, until he heard the nurse snoring, and found even the attentive Miss Bolton fast asleep.

Tom took the advantage of the torpid state of his fatigued attendants, and raising himself in his bed, he began,

as

as it were, more freely to employ his thoughts. He had not forgotten the apparition he had seen over night, nor yet the paper Miss Bolton had so good-naturedly put into his hand.

This paper he guessed to be still in his possession; for he had clenched it in his hand while in the fit, and when his muscles became more relaxed, he dropped it in the bed, unnoticed by those who attended him. When, therefore, he felt a scrap of paper in the bed, he readily conjectured what it was, and shuddered whilst he kept it concealed during the remainder of the day, while the light was carefully excluded from the room, besides, had it been otherwise, it would have been impossible for him to read it unobserved;

served; but now, as opportunity offered, he determined to peruse the scrawl which had been so fatal to him.

The glimmering lamp did not sufficiently enlighten the part of the room where the bed was. Tom gently stole out of bed, not being near so weak as had been thought, and stepped gently towards the lamp.

There, by a pale glaring light, he saw the writing, but it was not written with ink. The letters were marked in blood, and turned the contrary way to the usual manner of forming them.

On viewing this bloody scrawl, the spirits of Tom were so violently agitated, that,

that, forgetting the delicacy of his situation, he so vehemently expressed his terror and astonishment, as to awake both the nurse and Miss Bolton; the nurse shrieked aloud; and it was some time before Miss Bolton could obtain her assistance to put the half-recovered youth into bed again.

Miss Bolton picked up the paper, and burned it unperceived, so that every thing was re-adjusted before any enquiries could be made concerning the cause of the noise.

Miss Morney, however, having heard the screams, rushed into the room, demanding an account of what had given rise to them. Miss Bolton, with the prompt

prompt readiness of female invention, told her that Grey having attempted to walk in his sleep, the nurse, in her endeavours to force him into bed, had awoken him, when he cried out in so violent a manner, that they were both extremely terrified.

The tender-hearted Miss Morney, notwithstanding, would not quit the room without first creeping up to the bed-side, and gently feeling his forehead; when he clapped his hand upon her's, and groaned piteously, though he looked most affectionately.

“My poor Grey!” said she, sighing, sat down by him, and, in spite of the entreaties of Miss Bolton, watched all night without

without speaking or moving, only when he made attempts to speak, she would tenderly lay her hand on his mouth, and say, "Hush! or I certainly will leave you again."

This gentle admonition from one, the sound of whose voice thrilled the very soul of poor Tom, generally produced the desired effect; though at one time he something trespassed, by begging of her to be more careful of herself, and not to waste her time and attention on so unworthy an object as him, the devotion of whose life could not repay her kindness.

The picture of the scene, though distressing in one respect, was strangely diversified.

verified.—The nurse fast asleep in one corner, and Miss Bolton, her breast fluctuating with a variety of contending passions, in another; while Mary was attentively watching, with the most affectionate tenderness, every motion of Grey, who had almost resigned himself a prey to melancholy, though he had every encouragement to expect happiness in the arms of a fair one he loved with all the ardour of youthful affection.

The night being thus exhausted, Miss Morney returned to her father, who was more than ever convinced that an eclaireissement was absolutely essential to the recovery of Grey, and this he determined to attempt after breakfast. He gently chid his daughter for yielding so much

to

to despondency about a little sickness, and made her promise to retire to her chamber, and take that repose she so evidently stood in need of. Mr. Morney then repaired to Tom's room, and after seating himself, and dismissing the attendants, began as follows.



CHAP. X.

"**T**OM, you may, by the great consolation your illness has occasioned, perceive the affection with which you are regarded by every one of the family. As for me, my dear lad, I believe my actions make it unnecessary to declare, that in my heart you are regarded as a son. Speak then to me with the same freedom that you would to your most valued friend. I beg of you, therefore, to disclose what weighs thus heavily on your mind, that, if possible, I may

may contribute to the restoration of your tranquillity, or, at least, alleviate your sorrow by the best counsel in my power to give."

"Sir," said Grey, "I have wished for this conversation, however dreadful; but as you have taught me not to shrink from duties, even the most trying, I am obliged to tell you, my friend and father, that power is oftener shewn in wounding than healing. My sorrows can never cease; and even you, who love me so well, cannot, in all the world, find a remedy to assuage my wretchedness— Yet, would you answer me a few questions—

"Why,

“Why, I am all attention, Tom,” said Mr. Morney. “Propose your questions; but I must at the same time express my surprize at your manner. You call me, as indeed you justly may, your father, for so you have found me in affliction; and yet, if I hear aright, you add in the same breath, that I destroy your happiness—”

“Do you, Sir,” said Grey, “deny your relationship to me?”

“Ah!” replied Mr. Morney, “who has then unfolded to you what I thought not fit to reveal as yet?”

“Heaven itself,” said Grey, “revealed it unto me, and my unfortunate mother’s

ther's wrongs!—Wrongs that penetrate my very soul.”

“What! young man,” said Mr. Morney, his eye beaming with indignation, do you tax me with wronging your mother?—Is this my recompence for the tenderness I have shewn her son?—Is it compatible with the tenor of my conduct through life?—With my generous intention, so strictly pursued, of bestowing my daughter, and a handsome estate, upon you?—Fie! fie! young man, to join a censorious world in villifying my best actions—I wrong your mother!”

“Pardon me, Sir,” said Grey (as pale with agitation as the other was red with anger) “had I not been warned by su-

pernatural appearances, the whole world should never have made me run thus counter to all my hopes of happiness.— See, Sir, this picture—Was not this the woman you deceived into marriage, when you had already a wife and children?—Did you not force her from her country, to prevent her taking a legal course against you.”

“Hey!” said Mr. Morney, “your accusations come thick; and thus I answer them—Heaven forbid that I should have married your mother, either first or second, for she was my own sister. I joined in compelling her to quit the kingdom, for she had not only disgraced herself and family, but merited the severest punishment the laws could inflict. I
still

still however felt for you, as an unfortunate infant, who could not be supposed to participate in your mother's crimes. I therefore took you under my protection, bred you as my own, with my own, and would still have done more for you ; but your ingratitude has stung me to the quick, and we will rest where we are at present. When your sickness leaves you, I shall consider about your future residence. Good day, Mr. Grey."

" Oh, good dear Sir," said Grey, " only stop to hear me ; and let me entreat your forgiveness of my weakness, in having misconceived the warnings given me from the dead."

"The dead, Mr. Grey," replied Mr. Morney, "have nothing to do with the affairs of the living. You must excuse me if I refuse my assent to so gross an imposition. I would rather wish to be informed what artful person has deceived you by this tale, and what part of my conduct has induced you to suppose me a villain capable of crimes of the deepest turpitude."

"If you refuse me your belief, Sir," said Grey, "at least hear me. Perhaps the day may come when you will have reason to suppose me not so abandoned as to accuse my benefactor with fictions of my own raising."

Grey

Grey then repeated all that he thought himself at liberty to divulge, which, in fact, amounted to every thing that did not involve Miss Bolton's name. He mentioned that, being warned in his dreams, he went into the haunted room, where he found the picture; he also told Mr. Morney of the dreadful ringing of the bell, the apparition by the Chapel wall, and the fatal paper, the letters of which evidently appeared to have been written in blood.

“Now, Sir,” said Grey, “is there not something in all this?—Does it not imply the restless condition of my mother's disturbed spirit?—And might not any one in my situation have been misled as well as me?”

Mr. Morney was rather softened by this relation. "Why, Tom," said he, "you have certainly been imposed upon by some artifice; for, I assure you, it is the exact counterpart of the stories superstitiously circulated about the apparitions, which are never seen but by weak and ignorant people. But, pray tell me, how you came to think of walking out by the Chapel wall? You have not accounted for that circumstance yet."

"Dear Sir, I am not at liberty to disclose the reason of my being there, but even that has something awful in it.—Now then, Sir, I throw myself upon your mercy, only requesting you to believe, that death in its worst shape had been preferable to the task of believing
any

any thing derogatory to your character, or the thoughts of giving up Miss Morney."

"Miss Morney, young Gentleman, let me tell you, is not to be sported with. Give her up indeed! I rather imagine you will never possess her; I have not in my generosity to you done her quite justice; I was intent upon blessing you, and overlooked the many advantages she might enjoy in a different connection. With that intent she has been secluded from the world, left, among a variety of as worthy objects, she might have chosen otherwise than I in my infatuation wished: but you are too weak, Mr. Grey, too weak to guide yourself, much less an inexperienced young woman like my

G 4

daughter.

daughter. No, no; I find I must change my plan."

"Oh, Sir, good Sir," said Grey, while every limb and feature was marked with the trepidation he inwardly felt, "now I too sensibly feel my just punishment—Yet, is there no possibility of expiation? Am I to forego the love of her?—Of Miss Morney? Is there no other infliction, however cruel, that could be substituted for my punishment?"

Mr. Grey," answered the old Gentleman, "I never say any thing I do not purpose to perform. You, weakly, one minute renounce a woman on a false supposition, rashly embraced, and as easily relinquished; and the next (for you have
only

only my word against the ghost's) you expect this forsaken girl to drop into your mouth. No, Sir, my daughter shall now have a free choice ; I will introduce her to the company of her equals, and if, after three years separation, it should be your mutual desire to unite your fortunes, I will not oppose it, but until then I shall, by all fair means, keep you from the sight of each other, for I am not disposed to act the part of a novel father, who lays plots, and publishes false reports, in order to accomplish that by crooked means which might be easier done in a straight way. You may therefore rely, that I shall not tell her of your death, while I believe you to be alive ; married, while I suppose you to be single ; or inconstant, until she

herself discovers it ; neither shall I force her to wed any of the numerous train of admirers who may possibly address her ; but, nevertheless, I shall hold it my indispensable duty to give such advice as the circumstances of her situation may require. So, Sir, as you find yourself able to undertake a journey, I hope it will not be thought unreasonable, if I send you to travel or study, for my intention is not by any means to desert you."

"Sir," rejoined Grey, "your goodness is infinitely beyond my deserts. I will not again believe even the dead, should their communications be unfavourable to you, for, surely, no one but the Devil himself could have so deluded me."

"I am

“ I am afraid,” said Mr. Morney, “ it was some female devil who had a particular purpose of her own to answer.— Have any of my female servants ever tampered with you ?”

“ No, I protest,” replied Grey.

“ Well, I cannot now fathom it; nor is it of any great consequence; but I have discharged the lady who dreamt so conveniently for you the other night; I will not have any such artful or superstitious people in my house. As to you, Sir, I shall immediately collect a few papers relating to your birth and your mother’s fate, which will fully exonerate me from your ill-grounded suspicions; and I trust you will have prudence

G 6

enough

enough to keep that a secret, which, if made public, would only bring shame upon your own family, and sorrow into another."

So saying Mr. Morney withdrew.



CHAP. XI.

JUST as Mr. Morney had retired from Grey's chamber, he found two strangers alighting at the door, already known to the Reader by name, but who have not yet appeared as actors in the preceding scenes. The worthy old Gentleman was rejoiced to see them; and presently after in jumped Miss Morney, to salute her brothers, for they were *the strangers at home*. Their mutual congratulations occupied some time, and joy animated the countenance of each,
on

on a meeting so felicitous, which had been long wished by all the parties.

This ceremony over, the young men enquired after Grey, when Mary informed them of the particulars of his indisposition.

“How is he now?” added she, taking hold of her father’s hand, and looking wishfully in his face, as if to say—*Give me a favourable account.*

“How is he?” repeated Mr. Morney, “why, very filly girl, I would wish you to know it, and as your brothers are present, methinks the opportunity most favourable; I will therefore relate the account he has just given me.”

The

The old Gentleman then concisely related the several instances of Tom's timid credulity, the bare recital of which almost convulsed Edward and Charles with laughter. Their minds, cultivated by education, and strengthened by study, soared above the weakness of superstition, and they had no belief in aught but what could be accounted for by natural causes.

Miss Morney had more faith, or, at least, less confidence of self knowledge; she did not laugh; on the contrary, she turned very pale, and reclined her head upon the shoulder of her youngest brother.

At the conclusion of her father's narration, "Pray, Papa," said she, "what
is

is your determination respecting poor Thomas ?”

“ You might have gathered that, I think,” replied he, from my declaration to himself. I find that in keeping you both so recluse, I have done wrong : he must learn to think and act in the world, and you, in the same school, must acquire experience and judgment. Your love for one another has been forced upon you by my too sedulous precautions. I see the consequence will be, perhaps, productive of unhappiness to you both. So, Molly, if you are not frightened at the thought of three years constancy, you ought to thank me for my intention of shewing you the world before you are indissolubly united to any one person.”

I always

"I always understood," said Miss Morney, "that Grey was not even to speak to me of—of—of—I mean of any thing particular these three years; and as to constancy, that is what we are both very certain of; so, dear Papa, why need we see the world separately?—Are you not of my opinion, Charles?" turning to her brother, who smiled, and pressed her hand, quaintly observing—

"I cannot say, my dear Mary, your reasons are conclusive; though they might have appeared more forcible had you spoke in plainer language. You, however, shew yourself a little coward, in talking of constancy, yet dreading absence. Believe me, Mary, our father's plan is the best; Tom wants the know-
ledge

ledge of the world, and that you cannot teach him. If after a long absence you approve of one another, how much more satisfaction must you derive from a love founded upon judgment, than a blind passion hastily conceived, because you had not the alternative of any other choice."

"Ay," said Edward, "and she may see others so much his superior in fortune, talents, and accomplishments, that I doubt not this bastard cousin of ours will be rejected in his turn."

"Dear Edward, do not talk so," said Miss Morney, "Papa will not punish him for an involuntary fault; nay, not a fault, for he acted according to the best
of

of his belief, only that there must have been much deception practised upon him."

"Ay, ay, Mary," said the younger Morney, "no doubt you will prove him a most virtuous, grateful youth, for calling our father a rogue."

"Stop children," said Mr. Morney, "let us not contend—my resolution is well meant; and even Molly herself, I trust, will thank me at a future period, whatever she may think of it at present. I cannot entertain an idea of giving her for a Lord, master, and adviser, one whose weak credulity would ever expose him to the designs of the crafty. Experience will improve each party, and I shall endeavour

deavour to discharge my duty. Let us, however, for the present, change the conversation."

The young men had much to tell—the father many questions to ask; but the mind of Mary was occupied by more distracting thoughts. The proposed departure of Grey was a source of infinite uneasiness to her; and his rejection of her, and walk by the Chapel wall, were mysteries she could not account for.—She, in consequence, resolved to ask no more questions before Edward, notwithstanding the strong propensity she had to be satisfied in many particulars, as she perceived something in his looks and manner unfavourable to the object of her tenderest regards.

In

In truth, Edward had always been inimical to the match, and that merely through a brotherly affection for his sister, whom he considered to be worthy a superior connection.





CHAP. XII.

MR. MORNEY strictly enjoined poor Mary by no means to converse privately with Tom hereafter; adding, that she had always been accustomed to so much love and indulgence from her relations, as scarcely to feel any restraint in their presence, and from this circumstance she might think more hardly of the restriction he had thus imposed upon her; her brothers, however, would accompany her in his absence, that from their experience, conversation, and seasonable

sonable admonition, she might acquire much useful knowledge and valuable improvement.

Though there was nothing of unfeeling severity in this injunction, Miss Morney could not help complaining of the cruel condition it imposed. It is certain their former conversations had ever been such, that the world might have witnessed them without raising a blush on the face of either; and, in general, some or other of the family had been present at most of them; but now there was an obstacle in the way, the case was quite altered; she fancied she had much to say, and much to hear, which would be improper for other ears than her own and her lover's.

In

In this manner was the mind of Mary agitated ; still, her father must be obeyed, and yet she wished not that poor Grey should fall a hapless victim to the pangs of grief.

Miss Bolton was then sent for, as the supposed common friend of both, and informed of all that had passed, which, it is certain, she was prepared to receive without astonishment, though she feigned otherwise.

Mary, having opened her mind to Miss Bolton, she charged her with a message to Grey, which too plainly indicated the feelings of her heart.—“ Tell him, Betsey,” said she, “ that I forgive his error, but wonder he could betray so much credulity

dulity in a matter that, in its consequences, was likely to involve his own happiness.—But I freely forgive him, because he is sick and unhappy—I must only see him in company for the future, and may from thence, perhaps, often feel embarrassment—but let him not mistake constraint for coldness or neglect. I will form no engagement without my father's approbation.—But, notwithstanding my obedience to his will, my constancy shall prove itself unalterable."

This was repeated twenty times to Miss Bolton; but, alas! what treacherous memories do some people possess!—By the time she had reached Grey's chamber, she had forgot the greatest part of it, and concluding that it would be of no

service to report the story incomplete, determined on a suppression of the whole. Besides, she had business enough of her own upon hand, for she roundly made a declaration of her love for Grey, and expressed a willingness to follow his fortunes through the world.

Grey now called to mind her loving speeches on the fatal night that had brought him so much grief, but which had escaped a memory occupied with ideas so much more congenial to his feelings; and now the ungrateful youth, instead of being much obliged by such kind treatment, answered her in the most repulsive manner, taxing her with contriving plots to destroy his peace; and, in fact, he prompt declarations, had an appearance

appearance that in some measure justified his suspicions; but let that be as it may, with many tears and protestations, she endeavoured to convince him that no creature could be more innocent than herself; that she had long loved him in secret, and would yet have kept her passion undivulged, had not his hapless state, perhaps too much, softened her tender heart, as her soul was filled with only one wish—and that was to see him happy.

She appealed to himself whether there could be any deception in those appearances he himself had witnessed. He had obtained a picture, which was acknowledged to be that of his mother; surely, there was something in that; the warning to beware of incest might betoken

something that time would best elucidate; and, meanwhile, he ought to act with care, to prevent the explanation of these mysteries being too terrific.

The poor innocent creature, with her grief and sincerity, melted Grey into belief. In truth, it was impossible for him not to be persuaded of the reality of the apparition; and the discovery, in consequence, of his mother's picture, and Mr. Morney's acknowledgment of her crimes, and promise of her history, all tended to carry conviction to his mind. Grey earnestly wished to have the particulars of this history, and yet dreaded to learn them; fearing lest the several dreadful warnings should be found allusive to her own misconduct, when that should be properly

properly explained; for ghosts are as much given to ambiguity in what they convey to mortals, as the Oracle of Delphos of old.

Betsey was so overcome with joy and gratitude at his returning kindness, that nothing would serve but she must throw herself on the bed to give him a kiss of reconciliation; when, as the Devil would have it, the door opened, and the two young Morney's entered, one through friendship, and the other because his father desired that no resentment might be kept up."

"Well done, well done, Miss Bolton," said Edward, "that is a most affectionate hug, you are giving Grey a

most convincing proof of your attachment—I beg pardon for the unseasonable interruption.”

“Not at all,” said she, “I was only fastening his night-cap, because the poor fellow is too weak to help himself.”

“Faith,” replied Edward, “his situation was perilous enough—You are a devil of a girl, Betsey.”

Miss Bolton felt some confusion, and blushed, a mark of shame which she very rarely evidenced; but, indeed, it was not to be wondered at, considering the immodest leer with which young Morney regarded her, and which ultimately induced her to quit the room—though,

out

out of *pure* good-nature, she wished to stay a little longer, and congratulate the two young gentlemen on their return home.

The conversation that followed was loose and desultory, and of an import too trifling to deserve any particular notice. Each seemed to adopt a behaviour suitable to their respective feelings. Grey was depressed, and his mind harrowed with various reflections on his situation; Edward was freely indulging in a vein of sarcastic humour; while Charles, more kind and compassionate, was administering consolation to poor Grey.

Edward rallied him a good deal about his belief in ghosts, and hinted his sus-

picious about the conduct of Miss Bolton ; Charles, on the contrary, tried to soothe him, and soften down the satirical observations of his brother ; till seeing the distressed invalid fatigued and exhausted, they both departed.

GREY got up next day, and saw Miss Morney along with the rest of the family, but she now looked rather cool upon him, and Charles and Miss Bolton's former warmth of affection that had made his life pass so

Mr. Morney was kind, but it was expressed in a way that cut him more than reproaches could do. He told him he should enter the University as

CHAP.

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CHAP. XIII.

GREY got up next day, and saw Miss Morney along with the rest of the family, but she now looked rather cool upon him; only Charles and Miss Bolton kept up the former warmth of affection that had made his life pass so delightfully.

Mr. Morney was kind; but it was expressed in a way that cut him more than reproaches could do. He told him that he should enter the University as

soon as his health would permit; that his allowance should be ample, and that whether he was eventually married to his daughter or not, he should ever consider and treat him as a son.

"You shall moreover, Tom," added Mr. Morney, "to-morrow be put in possession of those papers, which I did intend to keep from your knowledge a few years longer."

"Oh, Sir," said Grey, "would that you might still act by me, and, if possible, think of me, as in those days when I was happy in my ignorance. The irresistible impulse of supernatural agency confounded my senses, and the weakness of my nature put false interpretations on

the communications so made to me—
but on your goodness I rely for my pardon.”

“I do not accuse you,” said Mr. Morney, “and will always endeavour to act by you, and think of you, as my sister’s son, of course next to my own.—The weakness you have manifested in your conduct is, I apprehend, the effect of your recluse education, which I am sanguine enough to hope a knowledge of the world will remedy.”

“Miss Morney too,” said Grey, “have you condemned me?”

“I am too sensible of my own imperfections,” answered she meekly, “to be—

come the censor of another's; I leave that to their own hearts."

"If you look so unkindly," replied Grey, "my conscience will accuse me of much unworthiness, but none that is intentional."

Miss Morney could not well answer what Grey had said, without disclosing that her secret anger arose from his supposed neglect in not answering her message, sent by the faithless Miss Bolton, who had so cruelly betrayed her confidence.

Mary, therefore, contented herself with telling him, that she should always be happy to hear of his welfare.—Grey
only

only answered with a sigh, but which conveyed more to the mind of the sympathetic fair one than words could express.—Mary sighed too, and uttered some expressions of good-will towards him, which emboldened his presumption to request permission to correspond with her.

“No, Sir,” said Mr. Morney, “that would be entirely to defeat the object I have in view. I mean to continue your guardian in every respect; and having gone so far as to promise you the hand of my daughter, I will not now retract what I have said, nor hereafter oppose your union, provided that, after the time of allotted separation, you should both continue agreeable to it. I must assure

you,

you, however, that I yet feel something of resentment within me. I do not altogether wish to see Molly bestow herself upon a man who has once rejected her, and traduced me, upon such ridiculous grounds. Your corresponding would only be a means of perpetuating an engagement, which I only consent not to break by violence. I therefore must exact your strict obedience to my will, or, in case of your hesitating compliance, I shall propose conditions which may be less accordant with your wishes."

Charles, pitying the distress of poor Grey, shook him heartily by the hand, and assured him he should not be forsaken by all, for he would keep up a correspondence with him."

Mr.

Mr. Morney very readily assented to this, only premising, that nothing more should pass in the letters concerning Miss Morney than general enquiries and common compliments. In this stipulation he persisted, in spite of the earnest entreaties of Grey, and the beseeching looks of his daughter."

Edward apparently thought his father too condescending; while Charles, on the other hand, approved of his determination, yet would have rejoiced more in having been able to soften the rigour of the sentence, for he had a feeling heart, that commiserated with all who had a claim on his pity, and was himself not insensible to the influence of *la belle passion* !

The

The meaning of this French *serap* will be readily understood by the female part of our Readers, who are more prompt in the translation of trifles from the original, and have greater facility of expression in conveying their ideas than the male part of creation. Hence a modern educated young Lady will, without study, at once give you the true meaning of a French *bagatelle*, while a man who has been poring unnumbered terms at the University, will waste many hours of study in misinterpreting the poignancy of a Latin epigram. But this is digressive from the main point; our story must be resumed.

Young Mr. Morney made many severe and ludicrous observations in derision.

sion of the credulity of those people who believe in ghosts, which greatly tended to promote the hilarity of the company, in which even Miss Bolton partook. It must however be observed, that in these jocular effusions he was surrounded by company, in the full meridian of day, which circumstances might tend to give spirit to these vauntings of courage and incredulity.

Nothing is more true than the observation, that distant dangers are lightly considered. Perhaps, had this young spark been enveloped in the dismal gloom of a solitary residence, at the silent hour of midnight, his temerity would have found some abatement from the seclusion of his abode, if his fears had not operated

ed to the abandonment of his opinion. Here, perhaps, according to the regularity of *novel division*, the chapter should close, but lest it should thereby become too short, it is only made to end a paragraph.

On the succeeding night, Grey was woken from his perturbed sleep by the entrance of Miss Bolton into his chamber, *tout en deshabille*. Whether by mistake or design was not clearly ascertained; but true it is that in her fright, either real or assumed, she flung herself across his bed, sighing and sobbing piteously, and only using inarticulate expressions. The result of this business, however painful to state, was evidenced beyond the power of contradiction; but whether it arose from

her

her boldness, or his weakness, was doubtful, though the certainty was no less that, in the fervor of passion, he had for a moment forgot Miss Morney, and all her charms—and, oh, shame to tell! effectually triumphed over the willing sacrifice of Miss Bolton's virtue!



CHAP. XIV.

HAD any one witnessed Miss Bolton's behaviour the next morning, they would have been ready to swear she was a paragon of virtue, and that nothing but the most consummate artifice on the part of Grey could have undermined the principles of so pure a heart. Indeed, our hero was so lost in amazement, that he had but little to advance in his own justification. He felt the severest compunction at having been drawn into a breach of that fidelity towards

Miss

Miss Mórney he had hitherto preserved inviolate. He did not even attempt to console Miss Bolton ; but beheld her dishevelled hair, and heard her cries and groans with an indifference, that evinced he had no affection for her.

After the first emotions of grief and anger had subsided, she became more tender, and soothingly asked him how he could bring himself to seek the ruin of a too fond girl, whose virtue was the inheritance she prized most ; but, of that he had deprived her, and she was undone!

Tom coldly answered, that, on the contrary, it was she who had undone him. "For you know," added he, "that

I never

I never thought of you but as a friend, or, indeed, almost a mother."

"A mother!" interrupted she, almost choaked with rage, "what! is every woman to be esteemed aged that happens to be a year or two older than Mary Morney? How dare you affront me so grossly? But I will be revenged; the whole family shall be informed of your barbarous treatment of me, both before and since the accomplishment of your wicked purposes."

Grey was now overwhelmed indeed; and melancholy, as he thought his situation the day before, it appeared a state of bliss compared with what he now endured. He wished to remonstrate with
the

the *undone maid*, but found himself unable to speak; when suddenly raising his head while she was tossing her's about in great agitation, they unluckily came in such unfortunate contact together, that the blood gushed violently out of her nose, and changed her *note* into a loud involuntary scream, which brought young Morney into the room to see what was the cause of it.

It would be difficult to describe the amazement and confusion of the scene. Miss Bolton concealed her head under the cloaths; and Tom, actuated by the same impulse, without reflection, dragged them off her to hide himself, so that in turns both were visible to the unwelcome intruder.

“Heavens!

“Heavens! Grey, what are you about?” said young Morney. “Who have you wounded? And what brought Betsey Bolton here?—Is this conduct becoming the man who aspires to *my* sister?—Of one who has been nurtured under my father’s roof with parental tenderness?—For shame!”

“Oh, Morney, Morney,” said Grey, “my heart is broken—do not expose me—I have offended unintentionally—I have been seduced into error—Do not tell your brother or sister, and I will give up all pretensions, for I am not worthy of her, but do not inform her of my misfortune, for it would be worse than death to be even the remote cause of uneasiness to her.”

Then

Then turning to Miss Bolton, he said, "Betsey, why did you thus come to destroy me? and immediately fainted, to the great terror of young Morney, who felt much alarm for his safety.

Miss Bolton, however, assuring him she had seen him in as bad a condition when he saw the ghost, he assisted her in using the best means they could for his recovery; when seeing him again open his eyes, she quietly retired to her own apartment.

Morney remained with Grey, who feebly thanked him for his present attention, but declared that he would rather die than live. "For now," said he, "I must live in constant dread of being

VOL. I. I discovered,

discovered, and thereby losing the good opinion of her whom I adore more than life; besides, I am rendered miserable from the thought of that imprudent girl, whom, I assure you, I never meant to injure."

Morney sat by his bed-side, and bid the young man take comfort. "You will get over this affair," said he, "much sooner than you imagine. Certainly my sister can now be nothing to you; and upon your promising to resign all thoughts of her, I will give you my assurance of not divulging the discovery I have made. Appearances are much against you from the situation in which I found you; and I fear your behaviour to Betsey has been cruelly unkind."

Grey,

Grey, with a view to the justification of his own *chastity*, gave Morney a particular account of the whole affair ;—the forwardness of Betsey was not omitted in the narration, nor the reluctance with which he became a participator in her guilt.

Thus nothing of the truth being disguised or concealed by Grey, the Reader will naturally conceive the effect it must have produced on the risible faculty of a volatile young man, like Morney. He did not confine it to a smile, for his very sides shook with laughter, to the great astonishment of Grey, who, at first, felt shocked at the indifference he expressed, and at last found himself unable to repress his indignation.

“ Well, Sir, well, Mr. Edward Morney,” said he, “ you are the only one of your whole family who would rejoice at the wretchedness of others. But know, Sir, I will be under no obligation to one of your disposition—No, I will go to your father, my uncle, tell him the story you now laugh at, and implore his parental admonitions; and if it must be punishment, I will endeavour to collect fortitude to enable me to submit with resignation to the severe sentence of losing Mary Morney.”

“ Pardon me, Grey,” said Morney, “ I only laughed at your qualmish scruples about a silly affair with an amorous girl; besides, you know reparation is easy; for really I see no serious objection to
your

your marrying Miss Bolton, as it would be uncharitable to construe an excess of affection into a crime of moral turpitude, as I think she would still make a good wife."

"No, no," said Grey, "I am too well convinced I can be happy with no other woman than Mary; and if compelled to renounce her, for her sake, I will renounce the whole sex."

"In that," said Morney, with a sneer, "you must use your discretion. I shall certainly inform my sister of your real character; and, I trust, baffle every attempt you can make to seduce either her affection or compassion towards you. Nay, should I find you even loiter in

this house beyond your appointed time of departure, or take one step towards making her your's, depend upon my fervent resentment, for, by Heavens, I will never consent to the match. You know my mind, Mr. Grey, so I bid you adieu.



CHAP. XV.

GREY was so alarmed at the threats of Edward Morney, and so miserable at the thoughts of beholding Miss Bolton, that he determined, weak as he was, to exert every power, in order to quit the house, which had been both the source of his happiness and misfortunes. Warmly impressed with this idea, he immediately got up, and after dressing himself, crawled into the garden, thinking he should derive benefit from the air, and seating himself in the alcove nearest to

where the gardener was at work, he beckoned the old man to come to him.

John, slowly approaching, expressed great surprize at the altered looks of the poor invalid.

“Old man,” said Grey, “you are one of those who have added to the heap of misfortunes that now overpower and distress me.”

“As how, Sir?” said John.

“Did you not tell me, a few days ago, that Mr. Morney was concerned in the cruel treatment of my mother, and that he afterwards dragged her, in spite of her tears and cries to a carriage, and that
she

she was conveyed to a distant country, lest she should appeal to the justice of the law?"

"O Lord! O Lord!" said John, "how a poor man's words may be turned about? Why, I said as how a nun, about two thousand years ago, was ill used by an elderly fat priest; and I said as how that your mother was married; and that her brother, Mr. Morney, and her husband, Mr. What d'ye Call um, found out sad doings, and so sent her 'yond seas; but I was a great fool to tell any thing, and so I never will again."

Grey waxed in such a passion with John, that the man was quite astonished; for he averred, and really believed, that

he now only forced a meaning on the tale he had formerly told him, for which he was convinced there must be some terrible reason, some deep plot against his peace. Grey, therefore, not only entreated, but commanded John to disclose the names of his advisers and abettors.

John was protesting his innocence, when Mr. Morney entered the alcove, with some papers in his hand.

"Tom," said he, "I have reflected that it will be best for all parties to avoid a formal parting. The weather is fine, and I would have you depart; but that your health may sustain no injury, you may stop on the road, so as to make
your

your journey pleasant and agreeable.—Immediately after breakfast, I shall take Molly out with me on a visit, to give you the opportunity of getting ready, and quitting the house without the formality of ceremony. Here are the papers I promised you, but desire you will not read them till you have left the house. And whenever you are want of money or advice, let me know, and you shall be provided with both, according to the best of my ability. I wish you not only health, but every good that can tend to make you easy and comfortable. I hope you will profit by what you have already experienced, and hereafter prove yourself deserving—you understand me. Adieu, my dear fellow!—Nay, do not follow me.”

Mr. Morney pressed Grey's hand affectionately at parting, and hurried back to the house, leaving this desponding young man a prey to grief and melancholy.

After remaining some time in a kind of stupor, Grey returned to his chamber, which overlooked the great court-yard, in order to see his beloved Mary once more, as she got into the chariot.

His breakfast was untasted near two hours, while he stood close on the watch at the window ;—but when at last he beheld the object his soul held most dear driven away, without one tender adieu to sweeten the long interval that must pass before they should again meet, it

was

was more than he had resolution to bear with any degree of fortitude ; nay, even he himself dreaded, that in the conflict of contending passions he might sustain a privation of intellect.

Indeed, but for the precaution of Edward Morney, this most likely would have been the case, as he prevented Miss Bolton from visiting Grey, from an apprehension that such a meeting might give rise to something that would tend to retard his departure, which he had urged his father by all means to accelerate.

To further his object, he himself went to Grey, and partly by persuasion, but more by severe remonstrances, he so far prevailed on Grey, as to obtain his consent

sent to set off immediately for the next inn, whither he was accompanied by Charles Morney, there to wait for the arrival of his servant and baggage, and proceed on his journey the next day.



CHAP. XVI.

THE conversation of Charles and Grey was chiefly eked out with mutual promises of friendship. Charles engaged to manage the affair with his sister, though Grey entertained no hope of his success ; nor could he think of entrusting his friend with the events of the preceding night, lest he too should withdraw his friendship, and thereby preclude him from every hope of reconciliation with the family, or happiness with Mary.

Grey

Grey, with his servant set off the next morning ; they took the great southern road ; nor did they stop till three o'clock in the afternoon ; his mind was so absorbed in reflection on the unpleasant, if not disgraceful manner in which he left his family, that he had no thought of refreshment ; nor, notwithstanding the entreaties of his servant, would he then have stopped had the horses been able to proceed.

Now, however, he alighted, and ordered a dinner, of which he previously determined not to eat ; but gave the order merely in compliance with the custom of travellers, and for the accommodation of his servant, whose appetite was something keener than his master's.

Grey

Grey had sat down in serious contemplation on his situation, when putting his hand into his pocket, he found the packet Mr. Morney had given him before, which he had entirely forgot. His other cares were now overcome in his anxiety to know about his mother; he therefore determined to stay where he was for the remainder of the day, and immediately set himself about examining the contents, having discovered the first sheets to be in his mother's own handwriting.

THE

THE PACKET.

“ I WRITE more to disburthen my mind of part of the load that oppresses it, than for the satisfaction of him I address; he deserves no such favour from me. I write, in order that, by a review of my conduct, I myself may be enabled to pass judgment upon it. I write to disclaim, in the name of my sex, the yoke imposed upon them by the tyranny of man. Men, what are *they*?—The *strong*; there alone lies their boasted pre-eminence. Their *customs*, are they not at perpetual variance with *laws*, which are only made to bind women!!!—women who had no voice in making them,
and

and therefore a *free woman* ought not to be shackled by them. With superior strength of mind, shall I be curbed by one who is my superior only in mere animal strength?—No, no; I will convince my sex that we have both the right and power, were we unitedly to maintain them, to make our tyrants bow to the same yoke with which they enslaved our mothers.

“I am free in thought—*that* I inherited from my father. You, brother, to whom I now write, may remember how different our parents were; my mother all that a man could wish in a wife; meek, virtuous, and religious—How was she requited!!!—My father, though he loved, yet despised her. He was courageous,

geous, sensible, and a freethinker ; but the liberty he gloried in possessing himself he condemned in my mother ; an adherence to principle in her was deemed obstinacy by him ; yet he entrusted her with the management of his affairs, and left the children entirely to her care, as if it had been of no consequence what principle they might imbibe. I well remember the many serious lessons she would have taught me, had not chance favoured me. From my infancy I was lively and handsome, and the only daughter of three children. You and George were well enough for boys, but there being two, parental affection was divided between you ; that for the daughter centered wholly in me. This often procured me an indulgence which you were denied.

nied. While you two were reading a chapter, conning a lesson, or writing a copy, in the nursery, I was listening to my father's improving conversation, which usually ran in a rich vein of humour. With what poignant wit would he attack my mother, who, poor woman, possessed no great deal, though she was sometimes happy in a retort. But from this she seldom got much credit, as my father generally checked her by ridicule, or contempt for her opinions, which would require the full exercise of her patience to put up with, for he could bear no repartee that made against him.—So much for the tyranny of man!

“ I soon adopted my father's opinion, that every thing my mother said was
nonsense ;

nonsense ; and that I should suppose myself wiser was a very natural consequence. Her lessons I neglected, her advice I laughed at, her threats I despised (for she never put them into execution) though then only nine years old. After my father, who was indulgent even to my faults, I continually fought ; for in the company of his associates, his conversation was lively, pleasant, and unrestrained. My youthful mind was influenced by their example, and my determination fixed to adopt their principles whenever I became emancipated from the constraint of obedience to parental authority. From them I learnt there was nothing to be dreaded from a future state, and that the first object of life was to promote the felicity of the present moment. Little did

did my parents conceive the turn of my thoughts ; the time for revealing them was not yet come. My mother had long withdrawn herself from a society whose sentiments were so uncongenial to her own, and trusted my father would not instruct me in tenets that could tend to the debasement of my morals. But he was fond of my company, and put no restraint on his conversation in my presence, little thinking I was capable of combining ideas so abstruse. Indeed I had recourse to one of those vices my father termed *religious*—namely, *hypocrisy*. Hence my perverseness to my mother passed for a sprightliness of disposition, difficult to controul ; and as I was prompt in the acquirement of external accomplishments, my father was indifferent to the rest.

“ This

“ This conduct was the natural result of a lively genius, which had imbibed the ideas of a favourite parent ; for I aspired to be man’s equal in thought and privilege, and abhorred the idea of restraint, either moral or religious. Besides, from whence arises the obligation of duty to parents, abstracted from religious belief? Is it not an extension of the law of *strong and weak*?—It has not its foundation in mutual consent. It is forced upon a creature, without the *intent* of welfare to him, who may hereafter curse the hour of his existence. Once brought into the world, natural instinct prompts parental nourishment during the helpless age of infancy, and sometimes it is given in hope of receiving support in turn. From this negative merit parents exact what they call

call filial duty, though some of them too often [consider the addition of a child only as the acquisition of a slave. Hence who can dispute my right to free myself when I can?—I write partly in answer to what I think my mother would say if she was alive, and hold my conduct justified by her own rule. The husband is the head and lawful governor of his family; therefore I was to copy him, and suppose him right—How was I to discriminate?—But the care of the children was left to her.—Why then teach us to despise that very care? Could I respect what he derided?—If, therefore, guilt attaches to me, I owe it to the example of my father. Different ideas direct us through the journey of life, and those who act up to the best of their reason and

belief, cannot, in strict justice, be accountable for the incidental errors of their conduct. But to return to my mother.

“ When you and George went to college, she visibly declined, and often said every comfort was gone, for she had no child left to console her—What consolation could I offer?—I sometimes spent an hour with her, but soon grew tired of her unvarying tone of good advice, and always embraced the first opportunity of retreating to my father’s library, not that such permission was given me, but I had procured a key, by which I could get access at any convenient opportunity. I was most partial to those books I had heard my father approve, and fancied they

they both enlarged and improved my mind; and any thing was preferable to my mother's conversation. She, poor woman, was never chearful in the absence of her boys, and evinced no partiality for me in her conduct. Though it was useless for her to make any complaints of me to my father, as my influence over him left me nothing to dread on that head; sometimes I was disgusted with her marked partiality towards her boys, for she seemed to fulfil her duty to me without any expectation that I should deserve it. I remember how tenderly she took leave of George and you on your return to school. She laid her hands upon the heads of her weeping boys, and, with streaming eyes, uttered a pious ejaculation for your present wel-

fare and future happiness. My father essayed to smile, but in vain—his eyes were involuntarily brimmed with tears, and for once he forgot the boasted *dignity of man*. From him I caught the contagious weakness, and shed a flood of tears. My mother threw her arms around us, blessed us all, then withdrew, and you departed.

“ My mother seemed pleased with me for a little while, but we soon fell into our old strain, which I used to denominate *old style* ; but even then my mind was ductile enough to have received another impression, had my parents determined on what that ought to be ; for impressions on young minds, like those on sand, though deep, are easily effaced.

I had

I had sensibility and capacity, but the latter was acquired at the expence of the former. I really loved my mother, but would not submit to doctrines that were unpleasant, and, as my father said, ridiculous. Indeed, after this, when my mother was pronounced in danger, I reproached myself for all I might have done amiss, and vowed within myself to amend, if Heaven should listen to my prayers for her recovery, and devote myself to its service. My prayer was not granted, and then I began to entertain the most presumptuous doubts of Divine goodness.

My mother, however, did not wish for life; she seemed not to bestow a thought upon this world; all her discourse was

about a future state. She would have converted us all, had not my father kept steady. But even he would sometimes appear moved, but that might be with affectionate grief for her sufferings.

“ I promised to remember behests, and so I intended; but she died, and there being nobody left to remind me of them, they gradually wore out of my recollection.”



CHAP. XVII.

I Broke off at the mention of my mother's death ; which melancholy circumstance did not long oppress my mind. The opinions I imbibed at this early period of life I took some pains to fix, and now retain them from a conviction of their being right ; and glory in possessing a freedom of soul, that soars above the shackles of selfish man's institutions. My father, for the sake of decency, observed something of the sorrow custom has prescribed on such occasions.

But this last duty discharged, he was seldom at home, and I was too young to be made the partner of his pursuits. Nor was this much regretted by me, as his absence afforded me the full range of his library. My mother's books were given to me for my own use, but these I seldom looked into, as they were mostly of a religious kind. It was, however, very perceivable that I made progress in nothing but my growth; and after having spent about a year in this wild way, my father engaged a governess, the widow of an attorney, who died insolvent, and left her and two daughters exposed to the greatest distress. She was strongly recommended, and certainly her appearance indicated much in her favour. My father told her that she would probably find

find some difficulty in her engagement at first, from having been so long my own mistress; but that he would not have me curbed all at once, as at my age, with a good understanding, every thing might be rendered easy without severity. Mrs. Meadows acquiesced; and under this good lady I possessed as much liberty as before, excepting only one hour every day after breakfast, which time my father usually spent at home; that hour we spent in study in my late mother's closet, surrounded with books and globes; but no sooner was he out of the gate than my lessons were over. Mrs. Meadows had visits to pay, letters to write, or novels to read; and I had my favourite studies to pursue. Thus were we satisfied on all sides; and to render my

life more comfortable, I was permitted to receive the visits of the two Miss Meadows, who being about my own age, were very agreeable companions to me, and entirely subservient to my will. My father too approved of them, and desired they would prolong their stay both on my account and his own, as he said it would establish a society in his house, that would prevent his being forced so often to seek for it elsewhere. I was rather hurt at this observation, as it argued an inferiority on my part. However, that little pique got over, I found many pleasant effects arising from it, as whenever my father dined at home, he mostly invited some of the neighbouring gentry. Upon these occasions, young as I was, I presided, and thus early in life was flattered

tered with an homage intoxicating to the vanity of a youthful mind.

“Beauty, which I possessed no inconsiderable share of, as I was led to believe, from the many compliments I received on account of it, operated little with me; though in that I ranked the foremost of the surrounding neighbourhood, I valued myself more on my endowments, and at the age of fourteen was persuaded I possessed all the strength of masculine understanding; and the dignity of my manners, and the style of my dress, attracted notice and admiration, and more particularly the approbation of my father, which he called a dignified reserve, and charged me to continue the same line of conduct until I should meet with a per-

son worthy of me, hinting, at the same time, that he had such a person in his eye. This communication was no way unpleasant to me, though I had determined that the selection of the object should rest with myself; for it was contrary to the principles I had imbibed, to submit, in so momentous a matter, even to the controul of parental authority.—He might recommend the person he approved, but it rested with me alone to sanctify the engagement.



CHAP. XVIII.

“SOON after the arrival of my Governor’s daughters at the Abbey, I perceived my father took particular notice of the eldest Miss Meadows. Tho’ young and inexperienced, I had sufficient discernment to observe he had conceived a passion I did not wish to see strengthened into a permanent affection. He, however, one day lessened my uneasiness on this head, by declaring that, on account of his children, he had formed a resolution never to wed a second wife.

Miss

Miss Meadows blushed violently, as if the declaration had militated against the realization of her hopes; and my father seemed to view her embarrassment with a satisfaction I could not account for. Her confusion was encreased by my asking what was the matter?—This inconsiderate question flurried her so much, that, in compassion to the evident agitation of her spirits, I requested her to retire to my apartment, where she might recover her spirits, as she appeared to be much disordered. She looked mildly, yet rather reproachfully at me—"How can you talk so, Miss Morney?" was all she said, and withdrew.

"My father and Mrs. Meadows left us soon after; I then began to express
my

my disapprobation of Miss Meadows' conduct, 'as I thought she aspired to the honour of becoming my father's wife.— In this opinion her sister concurred with me; but she seemed to be actuated principally from an idea that her sister would thereby acquire too great a superiority over her. This little envy I knew to be the natural workings of a female mind; but conceiving I could make Letitia's humour subservient to my views, I by all means in my power endeavoured to strengthen her in it. She too, in her turn, had a wish to excite my resentment against such a match, by hinting, that if her sister should ever become my step-mother, I should find her a very severe ruler. As to that matter, I was perfectly easy, knowing my own spirit would pre-
serve

serve my independence, and being determined that on the same day he took a wife I would have a husband.

“My subsequent behaviour to Miss Meadows was in the true spirit of female resentment; I slighted or checked her upon every occasion, till, at length, my father chid me for the peevishness of my behaviour, which served only more effectually to confirm my hatred of her. I contrived, notwithstanding to keep Letitia warmly attached to my interest, who one day brought me the transcript of a letter her sister had sent to a country cousin, of which the following is an exact copy:

MY

"MY DEAR JANE,

"I believe that in proportion to expected happiness is the bitterness of disappointment. I am now so depressed, that life is burthenfome to me, yet I dare not own the cause of my sorrow.— I have buoyed myself up with vain hopes, yet they were not prompted by ambition. I have deceived my heart with the weak illusion of gaining one so valuable, that I believe there is hardly a woman of sufficient merit to deserve him. I was too presumptuous, and now my hopes are fled, my spirits gone, and no comfort is left me in this world. Recurring to my former delusions would only embitter the succeeding moments of reflection. On your friendly consolations I can
alone

alone rely; for my sister dislikes me, and to my mother I am ashamed to be explicit on the subject, notwithstanding she evinces the most unbounded maternal affection towards me; but I cannot forget the reverential awe with which she once inspired me, and the rest of the inhabitants of the Abbey are nothing to me.

“ I have been here a twelvemonth.—
What happiness did I feel during the first six months of my residence! My young heart rejoiced upon the change of situation—to be brought from a cheap lodging in the next town to the Abbey, not like servants, as we might at one time have expected, but as visitors. Miss Morney shews no affability in her behaviour
to

to me, but that is amply recompensed by my mother's attentive regards. Her anxiety for our welfare and support was the occasion of what I have often thought unkindness ; but now that cause is removed, so is the effect. She calls me her dear girl, and says that in me centers all her happiness since my father is dead. Can I do too much for so good, so tender a parent. But to resume my narrative.

"Mr. Morney (whose very name palpitates my heart while I repeat it) is much older than me ; they tell me he is about forty, but he does not look any thing like that age ; then he is so handsome in his person, so agreeable in his manners, and engaging in his conversation,

tion, that my yielding heart could not withstand the influence of his united perfections ; nor do I think that even you, my dear Jane, blessed as you are with female prudence, could be often in his company without, like me, feeling your heart partially incline towards him.

“ At first, I only thought of him as the father of Miss Morney, to whom we were all under manifest obligation ; but soon the time seemed heavy when his society was wanting ; and, on the contrary, all was pleasant and agreeable if he was at home. Any little compliment paid to me by him would keep me awake the whole night. You would be surprized at the progress I have made in music, because he likes it. I stand behind

hind Miss Morney's chair while she takes her lessons; and when her master is gone, and she withdrawn, I practise with avidity what Mr. Morney pointed out as pretty, that is, I used to do so; but shall now drop every thing that can remind me of my folly. It is to be sure an innocent pleasure I take in playing his favourite airs, while he seems pleased with my execution, and looks so kindly, I sometimes think, as a lover would do.

“ One day he brought a piece of music to Miss Morney, and begged of her to play a particular ariette. She tried it, and threw it aside, saying that it was heavy. I wished to oblige him with it, but dared not; however, next morning, as soon as I was up, I stole into the room,
and

and in the softest tone played over the ariette, then in the same piano way sung it, and was so lost in thought and occupied with the music, that upon turning round, and beholding Mr. Morney with his eyes fixed upon me, I was frightened, and offered to withdraw hastily ; but he took my hand, and made me sit by him, while he thanked me for the pleasure I had afforded him, in such such a tender manner, that I was reconciled ; and he has many times since prevailed on me to play the same air, unknown to the rest of the family, without any thought of its being wrong ; but, however pleasing to myself it might be, I will not recapitulate the many little incidents which have brought us privately together, when his conversation mostly took a tender turn, without

without any reply from me but in sighs and downcast looks.

“I will not say I was without thoughts of the splendour to which I imagined he would some day raise me; but these were not the sole motives of my attachment; I loved him because I could not help it; and when I made the discovery of his passion for me, my mind was fluctuated with an idea of the benefit it might enable me to render my mother and sister; for being his own master, I conceived he had a right to dispose of his hand in such manner as he might think would be most conducive to his happiness—and I thought myself the happy object. I had no fortune, but I knew he was rich, and too generous in disposition,

disposition, to let money stand between him and happiness. I now see things in another light.

“But you will naturally ask what has brought me to my senses? I will tell you—I was standing some days ago at the window which looks into the court-yard, and saw Mr. Morney mount his horse—a handsome man, you know, looks to great advantage on horse-back—I fished and looked—I could not help it. He observed me, and seemed struck with the tenderness of my regards, kissed his hand, and rode off. My eyes involuntarily followed him up the avenue, till he came to the turning which would have obscured him from my sight, when he suddenly checked his horse, and returned. I was weak

weak enough then to suppose this arose from his inclination for my company. It was, indeed, to me he came, but for a purpose very different to what I imagined. It seemed only for the purpose of checking my presumption, as in the course of our conversation, when we were all sitting together, he said, "I have made a vow, for the sake of my children, never to marry a second time." He seemed concerned while he spoke, and looked very seriously at me, as did also the rest. Miss Morney seemed pleased with his declaration, and my mother's enquiring looks were alternately directed at Mr. Morney and me. Letitia too, who is always against me, enjoyed what she thought a check to my hopes. I was extremely agitated, and quitted the room

as soon as opportunity offered. My mother followed, and endeavoured to console me in my affliction, though she, at the same time, gave me a check for the folly of my behaviour. She added, notwithstanding, that she really believed Mr. Morney loved me; and advised me to assume a coldness of manner, which would sooner lead him to a discovery of his heart. To use artifice was contrary to my disposition, but I judged it expedient, to avoid any particular interviews, tho' even that might only tend to expose the weakness I wished to conceal. I dread discussing the point with my mother; for, notwithstanding I have told her the whole truth, and am sensible of her partiality towards me, yet, even now the first conflict is over, I cannot muster

courage

courage to converse with her on the subject; but shall endeavour to make myself as happy as I can. I am every day happy in his society; he calls me his little friend; and were I his wife, perhaps I might not see him oftener than I do at present; but then I should have the happiness of knowing him to be my own, and Miss Morney's *hauteur* towards me would be abated.

“Mr. Morney is more tender than ever; perhaps he sees and pities my weakness. Yesterday, as I went into my mother's apartment, I saw them both in earnest conversation, which they discontinued upon my entrance; and Mr. Morney, after kissing my hand, withdrew. I judged I had been the subject of their dis-

course, which my mother did not deny, but would not particularize; she only said that Mr. Morney was to be pitied from some circumstances, which prevented his being able to marry—"But," said she, "his love for you is sincere."

She extolled him for many qualities, that, infatuated as I am, I could not help thinking my poor mother's gratitude outran her prudence; at least, I am myself too apt to think well of Mr. Morney without her partiality strengthening my weakness.

I am, dear Jane,

Yours affectionately,

HARRIET MEADOWS.

immediate

L 3

CHAP.

court, which my mother did not deny, but would not particularize; the only said that Mr. Mornay was to be pitied from some circumstances, which prevented his being a party—"But," said she, "his love for you is sincere."

CHAP. XIX.

AFTER having read this letter, perhaps, with all your boasted benevolence, you will admit some resentment was due from me to the impertinent authorefs. I flew to Mrs. Meadows' apartment, in spite of Letitia's persuasion, with the scrawl in my hand, and tossed it disdainfully into her lap, desiring that Miss Meadows might be instantly turned out of my father's house. She read the letter with composure, entreated me to be pacified, and I should have

immediate satisfaction. On saying this, she took it to my father, who was in his library, informing him of my orders, that her daughter should quit the Abbey as a punishment due to her presumptuous sentiments, which she acknowledged to be romantic and ambitious, but still she was her child; and if turned out disgracefully for writing confidentially to her friend, she would accompany her.

"Be it so," said I, "neither my years nor understanding require a governess, you will, or I am much deceived, find sufficient employment in teaching your young lady humility."

"My father perused the letter with provoking marks of satisfaction in his countenance,

countenance, and enjoined me to return it to the place from whence I had purloined it, observing that no person of any morals would thus dishonestly come at the thoughts of another; and it was but common justice not to take the least advantage over the unsuspecting writer, to whom her gratitude was due for her good opinion of him, and if any of his family should insult her delicacy on that account, he should hold himself obliged to make her reparation by the offer of his hand, which otherwise, he solemnly protested, he would not do. There was time for us, he observed, to adjust every thing; accordingly, as she had taken a walk with one of his tenant's daughters that day, and probably would not return very soon; and he concluded

by saying we knew his mind, and must mutually agree so as to keep what had passed a secret for our own sakes. Whatever reason I had to be offended, in my father's presence I concealed my passion, but when I left it, conceiving myself lowered in the eyes of the others, I would not remain with them; I retired to my chamber, and kept it for a week, under pretence of illness. Mrs. Meadows was frequent in her visits to me, with a view to ingratiate herself in my favour, as was also Letitia; the latter I did not blame; and she was thenceforth my favourite and confidant, which distinction she studiously laboured to deserve: through her I received an account of every procedure of my father respecting her sister; and was mortified by the reflection, that

while

he was practising every seductive art upon her, to me he was constantly giving lectures on the dignity and modesty a woman ought to preserve, the morals necessary for her observance, and, on the other hand, the shame and infamy that attached to her character, if, in deviating from these, she gave a loose to her own passions. It is not necessary to detail the maxims of a parent, who, in his own conduct, violated them all. I must however observe, that Harriet was never present at any of these admonitory lectures.

“My father no sooner discovered the weak partiality of Harriet towards him, than he determined upon making it subservient to his own mercenary designs. With this view he thought of founding

Mrs. Meadows, in whom he had perceived something of a mercenary disposition; nor was he much deceived in this opinion. She at first made a stand for her daughter's honour and her own, and seemed to hint that nothing less than marriage would receive her concurrence; but at length, finding my father as obstinate against it, she abated something of her demand, and merely stipulated for a settlement of two hundred pounds *per annum* on herself, and as much for Harriet, as an indispensable preliminary to the obtaining of her consent. So now, instead of cherishing the notion of her daughter becoming my father's wife, she dwelt upon his love and generosity, with hints of the splendour and happiness she might enjoy in being his wife in all but the

the name, which the peculiarity of his situation would not admit of, at least for the present.

“Miss Meadows had been educated by a grandmother, who had early instilled into her mind the principles of virtue and religion; and these so far for a while seemed to operate upon her, that she could not believe it possible her mother was serious in the advice she gave her; at least, if Harriet was not really actuated by these motives, she affected to be so; though possibly the strength of her affection might overcome the weakness of her resolution, and induce her to believe, that yielding to the impulse of her passion she should not transgress against the decorum of virtue.

“From whatever motive, however, her conduct might arise, it is certain she for some time resisted the dishonourable attempts of my father to advantage himself of her partiality; though, considered in a pecuniary point of view, she had nothing equal to expect in the way of marriage. Every circumstance that transpired was faithfully reported to me by my trusty spy, Letitia. From her information I regulated my own conduct, but was afraid of shewing my resentment lest my father should actually put his threats into execution. Notwithstanding the squeamishness of Harriet, I found a visible alteration in her behaviour, and that she daily assumed fresh airs, in proportion as my father continued his assiduities towards her.

“But, however elate Miss Meadows might feel herself in the contemplation of her proffered state of aggrandizement, her scruples were not so readily overcome as her mother expected, nor my father wished. Thus disappointed, they concerted measures for the accomplishment of their wicked purpose, in which they were finally but too successful. Thus do we find parents, from motives the most mean and unworthy, facilitating the ruin of their own children, and trampling upon all laws moral and divine. Miss Meadows was at first very unhappy from her matrimonial schemes being rendered abortive, though my father used every assiduity to tranquillize her mind. Though something vexed at the little respect shewn to me by the transaction, I

was

was glad that there was an end of all their schemes of legal union, and that she was reconciled to the idea of her connection being a marriage in the sight of Heaven.

"My father, conceiving my being in the house a restraint upon his actions, in which he preserved the decency of appearance, announced to me my emancipation from a governess, but hoped Mrs. Meadows would favour me with her company while at the Abbey ; and, during my absence, if she would undertake the superintendence of the family, it would greatly add to his other obligations, as he had resolved to send me to London, in order to my improvement by the best masters, and his sister, Lady Trevor, expected me

to

to pass the winter with her. I cheerfully coincided in the plan, only stipulating for Letitia as my companion; this was at first opposed on Lady Trevor's account, as she might not wish to encrease her family with an unexpected guest; but I was resolved not to go without my friend; and as I had been accustomed to be indulged, and my absence was now wished for, this was granted, and preparations made for my departure within the week."



CHAP. XX.

"MY father was fond of me still, though rather carried away by his young mistress, who began to accept of his presents very cordially, and to demean herself with a sort of impertinent composure, instead of the downcast blushing looks that used to express the shame she had felt. Indeed, her mother did all she could to inspire her with confidence, to what could be expected. But to return to myself.

"My

"My father likewise was generous, and gave me a very handsome allowance for my pocket, besides some trinkets that had been my mother's. He opened her casket, in which were laid up the superb jewels that in former times he had decorated her with.

"These," said he, "with many other tokens of my affection, shall be your's the day that sees you wedded, provided my consent goes along with it. If you mind Lady Trevor's example and advice, and recollect your mother's, you will do well. Girls are not to take their male relations as patterns; their moral and relative duties are far different." I had not then fortitude enough to brave my father, but I thought—And then follow my mother's

ther's example!—What, to meet her reward!!!—No, not to save mankind from perdition.

“ But I concluded that much of this good advice was only for form sake, so from the same good motive I made suitable answers; I felt gracious to the whole world, from the overflowings of my own satisfaction in a full purse, and the prospects of pleasure that were opening before me. Letitia and my servant both insured the conquests I should make, and vanity inclined me to believe them. I had my father's coach and four, with two servants attending, beside the two females, all subservient to my commands. I soon wiped away the few tears that dropped on leaving the Abbey, and felt

my dignity and independence. I looked upon myself as nearly emancipated from all authority, and determined by my conduct to make those who *knew* me *know* that also.

“These reflections branched into many others while on the road, and, of course, I conversed but little. Adventures on the highway have seldom much worth recording, and are now exploded even in novels. I did not expect to meet any, and so it turned out, till on the fourth evening after quitting Morney, I found myself at my aunt’s tea-table in Grosvenor-square.

“It required my stock of dignity not to feel abashed at the appearance of my

aunt

aunt and cousin, and the looks of astonishment they cast upon me, who so lately set the fashion at Morney. Indeed, being accustomed to know my own consequence, had prevented my caring about the mode, so that if what I wore was rich and becoming it was enough; and as my society was only made up of the Meadows, what opportunity had I of learning the variations of folly; but here the whole evening was spent in conversing upon the necessity of dress, and other fashionable trifles, to make the least figure in the polite world; and then it was gently intimated to me what a dreadful object I was.

“I remember that my shape was undisguised, my stays being made only to
fit

fit me, but that would not do, for it was the waist two inches lower than the hips, with a peak tapering down behind, which in a short woman almost reached to the calf of her leg. Luckily I was tall, and thence looked better than many, and actually preserved an appearance of legs, which in some were concealed by these hideous-shaped stays. The head-dress was no less ridiculous and unnatural, but not very difficult to adjust according to the mode, as most ladies were provided with *têtes*, dressed by barbers, which, by tying over the hair, concealed all its imperfections. Thus encumbered with stays, *têtes*, hoops, and long treble ruffles, to adorn the great negligees, were women of fashion disfigured, and “the modesty of nature overstepped.”

“Despising

“Despising this trumpery of fashion, I notice it merely by way of apology for the steadiness with which I resisted this monstrous fashion, as it could only tend to hide the charms Nature had bestowed upon me—my easy shape and glossy nut-brown hair; conceiving that by adhering to my own mode, I should be admired no less for sense than beauty by the men, so that all the discourses of my aunt and cousin were set down to the score of envy.”

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

